

I Shall Not Want

#0639

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—September 28, 1957

[Singing – “Teach Me to Pray,” by Albert Simpson Reitz]

Will you all take your Bibles and turn to the 23rd Psalm. I suppose this Psalm has been repeated and sung more than any other psalm in the 150 that we have in this book. In all ages, among all nations, it has been appreciated. This morning it sings to my heart a message that I want to share with you.

“The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. 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. Thou preparest a table before me in the midst of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever” Psalms 23:1–6.

I suppose that if there is any sentiment that is evident in this beautiful psalm, it is that of contentment, satisfaction. And that’s exactly what the Lord wants to give everyone.

In the book *Education*, page 41, I read:

“...A life centered in God is a life of completeness. Every want He has implanted, He provides to satisfy...”
Education, page 41.

I’d like to study this first verse of the psalm for a little while this morning.

“The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want” Psalm 23:1.

Of course, those who are acquainted with the old English from which the Bible is translated will recognize that this word “want” here is dealing with the needs that which might be lacked.

So, David is saying, “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not lack anything.”

It’s another way of repeating that wonderful assurance that Paul gives us in Philippians 4:19:

“But my God shall supply all your *need* according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” Philippians 4:19.

Some days ago I fell to meditating on what the elemental needs of man are, just what the basic requirements of man are. I mean not merely to exist as a worm or a horse, but to live. And I finally made ten of them.

I started with “light.” I think we need light, don’t you? As the Bible says:

“Truly the light is sweet...” Ecclesiastes 11:7.

Has the Lord arranged to fill that need, to supply that light? Oh, yes, yes. That’s what He put the sun for. That’s why when the sun has gone down, He’s put the moon and the twinkling stars in the sky. The Bible says He made them to give light. He put them up there for lights [a paraphrase of Genesis 1:14–18]. The need is here; that which supplies the need is here.

When I was thinking of my list the other day, I put down “air.” We’ll all agree there’s a great need for air, for breath. How a person gasps for breath if there is any cutting off of the supply, either from outside or because of the ability of the body to take it in. Yes, air is one of the greatest needs, perhaps in some ways *the* greatest need for life.

And so, in harmony with our heavenly Father’s wisdom and love, He has supplied in greatest abundance that which is needed the most, for what is nearer and more accessible than air? What is more universal than air? Light comes and goes, but air is with us always unless we choose to shut it out.

And then, I put down “water.” We all feel the need of that several times a day. We get thirsty. Why is that thirst there? Because we need water. And every want that God has implanted, He provides to satisfy.

And so, from 10,000 springs, we see the water gushing forth. What for? To supply that need. We see the rivers coursing on their ways to supply the needs of thousands, tens of thousands in these towns and cities. We see the rain coming down, as it is today. What is God doing? He is arranging to satisfy that need, that want of water.

And then, I thought of “food.” I suppose at one time in my life, I would have thought of food first. I’ve been interested sometimes when I’ve been lecturing to high schools and junior high schools, and I’ve raised the question of what the body needed, what its live cells needed, frequently the first answer, the chorus of answers that I get is “food.” In the young life, there seems to be quite a constant sense of need along that line, and it’s normal; it’s as it should be.

Of course, when we get down and think it through, we recognize that we need water more urgently than we need food and need air still more urgently. But we need food, good food, plenty of food.

David says here in the psalm:

“Thou preparest a table before me...” Psalm 23:5.

God has arranged to supply our need. When He led His people out there in the wilderness, and there was nothing in that barren desert for them, He gave them of the corn of heaven.

“Man did eat angels’ food...” Psalm 78:25.

And He’s taught us to pray in the Lord’s prayer:

“Give us this day our daily bread” Matthew 6:11.

It’s God that’s supplying our need of food. And here in this beautiful picture in this shepherd’s psalm, that need of food is not overlooked.

“The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures” Psalm 23:1–2.

The margin says “pastures of tender grass,” and how the sheep love that tender grass. See a flock of sheep move into a meadow, pasture and get right busy. The Shepherd has brought them to the place of feeding.

And so, our God in a very literal way as our Shepherd is providing us with these elemental needs of life, with light and air, with water and food. Well, you can go on and make your list of the things that are needed in life. I shall pause on that particular list right there. I made 10 before I got through. And it just made me happy to think how abundantly God is supplying all those needs.

But I would like to go on beyond this this morning, dear friends. For while I doubt not that David is thinking of want, basically in the sense of our requirements, the things that we have to have, yet I rejoice to know this morning that our Shepherd is not content merely to give us shall I say the things that we have to have. He is not satisfied to give us merely that which will keep us from dying.

He tells us in John 10:

“I am the good Shepherd...” John 10:11.

“...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” John 10:10.

Jesus is interested not merely in extending our life lengthwise, on and on. He wants to increase it in height, in depth, in breadth. He wants us to live that more abundant life which is completely satisfying, increasingly satisfying. For after all, to satisfy us means more than the length of days.

I’ve often thought I’d rather live one day as a man than a hundred years as a turtle. You know, on the Galapagos Islands, they have these aged turtles, and some of those turtles live to be more than a hundred years of age.

Well, if I had my choice, I'd say, "Give me one day as a man, and I'll go to sleep. Let the turtle live on."

Wouldn't you? Yes. So, it is not merely the length of days that we seek. It is this abundant life that satisfies.

And the message I would that God would crowd into all our hearts this morning till we are shall I say stuffed full of it, like you pack a suitcase when you're anxious to take everything you can with you, you know, is this. God wants to completely satisfy every longing of the heart. Not merely the craving of the body for food, not merely the hunger for air from the lungs, but every desire of the mind and soul God longs to completely, abundantly, eternally satisfy. And He can be satisfied with nothing less.

Notice the 37th Psalm, beginning with the 3rd verse:

"Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed" Psalm 37:3.

That's the basic needs, the elemental needs. You'll have that.

But now, watch:

"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" Psalm 37:4–5.

Ah friend, nobody but God could do that. Nobody but God has the resources to promise such a thing and carry it out.

"*Anything* that you desire," He says, "that's what I want to give you."

But do you know the greatest reason, perhaps why only God can do this? Think it through. Nobody but God knows what the desires of your heart are, my friend. That's the truth. Nobody but God knows what the desires of your heart are.

Come now, any of you that have lived longer than a *few* years, is it not true that occasionally you have gotten exactly what you thought you wanted and found out you didn't want it at all? Anybody here ever had that experience? Well, some of you aren't thinking quite as fast as others.

Believe me, friends, any man that lives very long and looks over the life record honestly, meditatively, analytically, will agree that there are some things in life that he wanted very much and got them, and found out that they weren't satisfying. And I'm not talking just about bad things.

Certainly, the world is full of disappointments that come from people seeking after bad things. Many a man has set his heart on some wicked thing, some

abominable thing, and has found that it was very, very bitter in the end, instead of being sweet.

But I'm not thinking so much of that. No. I'm thinking of this, dear friends. There are many things that may be perfectly good in themselves, but they lack the satisfying quality that brings the thanksgiving that the 23rd Psalm deals with.

God has arranged not merely to satisfy wants in general but your individual wants. And believe me, you are an individual. And what you want, what you *really* want, what you want down inside is an individual matter.

I suppose we've found that true with foods. We sit at the table sometimes and hear someone raving, as the saying is, about some dish.

And we say, "Well, I guess I'll try some of that."

And we take some, and if we're where we feel perfectly free to say exactly how we feel with no inhibitions, we'd probably say something like this, "I don't see what you see in that. I don't understand that at all."

It's interesting to me to notice the way people react to different foods. I know some people that like mangos.

There are other people that say, "Why, they're just full of turpentine. I don't see what anybody would want to eat them for, just full of turpentine."

I always thought watermelons were very good, but my mother used to say she'd just as soon stir up some sugar and water and drink it. She didn't see why anybody'd like watermelon.

My point is we're individuals. And while we may share certain likes with others, deep down inside, my dear friends, there is something about *you* that is unlike anybody else. And merely dishing out in a wholesale manner what is supposed to please the crowd might tickle your fancies, might divert your mind, might entertain you, but it can never basically, and fully, and deeply, and eternally satisfy your mind and soul.

You are an individual, but you are an individual with life ahead of you. And if you're 80 years old, I still say life is ahead of you, oh yes, very much ahead of you. And because it is ahead of you, you cannot see, you cannot know, either all you desire and will desire or all that God will arrange and provide to satisfy. You can't know that. And the answer of being satisfied is not in knowing it, but in knowing the Shepherd.

"The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want" Psalm 23:1

David was not merely voicing a satisfaction concerning the present, but regarding the future also.

"The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want" Psalm 23:1.

“I shall never want.”

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever” Psalm 23:6.

How different is that from the lament of thousands who say, “Life always gives me a raw deal. I seem to get the bad pennies. I’m always having a hard time.”

And by the way, the man who said this had some experiences that I suppose we wouldn’t choose. He had to run for his life over and over and over again.

Once, when he was playing for the king, the king took the javelin that was in his hand and threw it right at David. Almost hit him, too. And for years he had to flee from place to place, now living in a cave, now living out in the woods, now living out in the deserts, never knowing day or night, sleeping or waking, when he might be surrounded with enemies who were bent on taking his life.

No, this psalm is not the song of one who has no difficulties, no troubles. Right in the middle of it, you get that picture.

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...” Psalm 23:4.

David, walking in the valley of the shadow of death? Yes, that’s it, “The valley of the shadow of death.” Sometimes we think of that as coming to the end of a long life, and gradually getting weaker and sinking down in slumber. May be, but I’m inclined to think that David, as he wrote this, was thinking of the many experiences that he had had when literally he talked with death, when death was at his right hand, “the valley of the shadow of death,” when death was right on him.

But He says:

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil...” Psalm 23:4.

Why? Because I have a group of soldiers with me, who are experts in war?
No.

“...Thou art with me” Psalm 23:4.

You notice again, the satisfaction is in the Shepherd.

“...For Thou art with me...” Psalm 23:4.

“Thou art with me...” Psalm 23:4.

And believe me, my dear friends, there is only one experience that can fully satisfy every want of the soul, and that is Jesus Himself. And may I tell you that

every other need that God has arranged within us, and the satisfaction of that need that He provides, is for the purpose of teaching us that.

We started off this morning with a need of light, but in John 8:12, I read the words of Jesus:

“...I am the light of the world...” John 8:12.

And David sings:

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear?” Psalm 27:1.

Yes.

“The LORD is my light...” Psalm 27:1.

And as I read that, my mind goes back to one of the earliest songs that I learned in Sabbath school, and I can hear them singing it:

“The Lord is my light; then why should I fear?
By day and by night His presence is near;
He is my salvation from sorrow and sin;
This blessed persuasion the Spirit brings in.”
Seventh-Day Adventist Hymnal, #515, first stanza.

“The LORD is my light and my salvation...” Psalm 27:1.

What light is to this world, Jesus is to my soul.

Or again, take this matter of water. Ah, Jesus at the feast of the tabernacles, as the priest took that flagon of water from the brook and poured it out in the presence of the multitude, recalling to mind the water from the rock in the days of Moses in their desert wanderings, Jesus catching up the figure of the moment said:

“...If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive...” John 7:37–39.

And so, whenever you and I are thirsty, and we long for a cooling drink, let us remember that God is seeking to teach us that what water is to the thirsty body, He Himself is to the longing soul. And as nothing but water can satisfy one who is thirsty, so nothing but Jesus can satisfy the longing of the heart, nothing but Jesus, friends.

I think of the experience of that one, who was termed the wisest of men, King Solomon, one of the richest men that this world ever saw, and blessed with a mind

far above any mind that we know today. And in the height of his glory, he decided that he would fully satisfy every longing of his heart.

You can read about it in Ecclesiastes. He tells about it in retrospect. He tells of the different things that he did. He tells of the buildings that he erected; the gardens that he planned and planted.

He tells of his gathering of treasure, gold and silver and precious stones. He tells of his retinues of servants, his fleets bringing spices and gold and other things from distant lands.

He tells of his interest in various phases of life, his study into botany and zoology, his study into every field of science.

He tells of his making of books, his writing of proverbs, his songs, his interest in music, both original and that which he got from others. He tells of his choirs and his orchestras.

He tells of all the efforts that he made to fully satisfy the longings of his mind and heart. And when he got through, he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes.

And he says, "It's all vanity, vanity, emptiness. It does not satisfy."

"Well, why not? Why, I just love music. If I could have more music, I think I could be satisfied."

Solomon says, "No. I've had all of it, but it doesn't do it."

"Oh, but I love to eat. If I could just have all the things I want to eat, I know it would satisfy me."

No. Solomon says, "I've tried that. I've had everything. It doesn't satisfy."

"Ah, but if I could just *do* things, I love to *do* things. And if I could get out here and plan developments, subdivisions, gardens, buildings, and have the money and the men to carry them out, I *know* that would satisfy me."

Solomon says, "I've done it to the tune of millions and millions and billions of dollars, and it doesn't satisfy; tried it all."

And so, he writes down in the last chapter of that book:

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,
while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh,
when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them"
Ecclesiastes 12:1.

Oh my friends, oh this morning that God might help us to see it is not merely the wicked, the abominable things of this world from which we need to be delivered. It is from this human tendency to chase after things and achievements as the answer

to the cravings of the human soul. And there's one thing that the human soul longs for. It is a fellowship with its Maker.

But oh, how often that desire is not understood. The cravings are not interpreted. The enemy suggests that what we really want is this, or that, or the other thing. And he suggests now bad things, now good things. The enemy does not care what we chase after, just so long as it is not that fellowship with Jesus which he knows will abundantly satisfy us and keep us from all his allurements.

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,
while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh,
when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them”
Ecclesiastes 12:1.

Why, you know, as I look back over the pages of history, it seems to me that if there's any man to be pitied, it's Solomon, the wisest of men, the richest of men, but oh, one of the most disillusioned of men, the most frustrated of men, the most disappointed of men. I thank God, friends, I can say truthfully this morning I wouldn't trade places with him. I wouldn't. I wouldn't trade places with him.

God knows as I look back over my life, I can see that I've made mistakes, and I'm sorry for them.

But I can testify in my soul, “God satisfies me.”

I have no regrets over the way my God has led me.

I can say, “My Shepherd is a good Shepherd. He leads to the green pastures. He makes me to go by the still waters. I love Him. He satisfies” [a paraphrase of Psalm 23:1–3].

And I believe what I have studied and read this morning, that *every* want He has implanted He provides to satisfy.

You know, some of our desires now are a bit perverted. They're a bit twisted. I notice that these mechanics, these men that know how to deal with machinery, sometimes they will listen to something, and they'll say, “This is a little off here, a little off there.”

And they'll reach in there with some little wrench; they'll make just a tiny little adjustment.

They'll say, “That's all right now. It's all right.”

Or they may reach in with some pliers and just straighten something just a little that's been twisted.

Do you know that in a sense, every sin is just a twisting of a proper impulse and longing, every sin is. The Devil, after all, is no creator. He never originated anything. All the Devil ever did in heaven or earth was just to take something God-

given and pervert it, twist it, change it. That's all, that's all. And so, when you study sin you'll find that it's a distortion, a twisting, a perversion.

And thank God, through the Gospel, we see how Jesus is in the straightening process. He is in the business of restoring to its proper place and its proper function every desire and longing of the human soul. He's not going to stifle any of them, not going to stifle them. Of course, I recognize that what we are saying this morning is far away, different from what the enemy says.

The Devil is saying, "Don't get around God, or He'll take something away from you that you dearly love. Don't go around Him unless you want to be a monk or a nun or something like that because the nearer you get to Him, the farther you'll get from the pleasures and satisfying things of life."

But my Bible tells me he's a liar, and I believe it, friends. And one reason I believe it is because he's lied to me so many times. Yes. I cannot have confidence in him.

"The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want" Psalm 23:1.

But ah, let me tell you that what we experience here of joy and satisfaction in the things of God, a fellowship and love (for that, after all, is the great longing of the soul is fellowship), let me tell you, friends, that this is just the beginning in this life.

Turn to Ephesians the second chapter beginning with the fourth verse:

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"
Ephesians 2:4–6.

Watch:

"That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" Ephesians 2:7.

Why yes, in the ages to come, He is going to demonstrate through us His wonderful kindness and His eternal love. A million years from now, our increasing desires will be increasingly satisfied. A million years from now our expanding plans will find expanding fulfillment. There the greatest enterprises will be carried forward, the largest plans launched and achieved. And every desire of the soul will be satisfied.

Why, I read in the 65th chapter of Isaiah that wonderful picture of life in the earth made new:

“And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands” Isaiah 65:21–22.

And then in the 24th verse, oh listen:

“And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear”
Isaiah 65:24.

You know, just two weeks ago today, I got the sweetest little example of this, and I think God is pleased when we notice even the little providences of His love, don't you?

I was walking with a friend of mine up here out in the woods near the Laurelbrook school. He'd taken me out to a bluff where we could look way out over the valley. It was a marvelous view.

And then, we walked on out through the woods, and we were walking on and on. And the thought came into my mind (I didn't say a word about it to him; it was a warm afternoon), the thought came to my mind, “You know how nice a drink of good cold drink is going to taste when we get back to the school.”

And I had hardly had time to ponder that, but what there as we walked along was a gurgling little spring coming out the side of the bank. Yes, right there.

And I said in my soul, “Isn't this nice. The Lord lets me get thirsty just to appreciate this, and then He has the spring right there to drink of it, right there, right there; didn't have to wait a half-hour or an hour until I got back. There it was.”

“Ah, but,” you say, “it isn't always that way.”

No, no, it isn't. But my dear friends, God promises me that in the kingdom of God He is going to demonstrate to me that everything was just exactly like that.

And I'll say, “Yes, Lord, it was.”

In other words, everything came just when it was needed and just when we really would have wanted it, if we could have seen what He sees.

“God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him” *Desire of Ages*, page 224.

“The King of love my Shepherd is,

Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His,
And He is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul He leadeth,
And, where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish, oft I strayed,
But yet in love He sought me,
And on His shoulder gently laid,
And home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill,
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me;
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spreadest a table in my sight,
Thy unction grace bestoweth,
And oh, what transport of delight
From Thy pure chalice floweth.

And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd! I would sing Thy praise
Within Thy house forever"

Seventh-Day Adventist Hymnal, #197, stanzas 1–3 and 6.

Oh, let us all join, let us all join in this confession of faith, this expression of loving trust with David this morning.

Now, you have it there in your Bibles. If you do not, will you turn to the 23rd Psalm and let us say it. Let us, as it were, sing it together here, this beautiful psalm, these words of loving trust this morning. And let it be the expression of every heart.

And oh, my dear friend, should there be one here this morning that has never yet known the Shepherd's love and care in your inner soul, would you not this morning choose Him as yours?

Would you not this morning say, "Lord, I want to be yours."

And He will say to you, "You are mine."

And so, you can say this as an expression of choice this morning, "The Lord is my Shepherd. The Lord is *my* Shepherd. He's mine, He's mine. He's mine."

And should there be one here this morning that, like that sheep that Jesus told about, has wandered away, let me tell you this morning the Shepherd is seeking you.

He loves you. For your sake, He would leave the ninety and nine in the fold and go after that which is lost until He find it.

And believe me, He is near at hand. He is at your side. If you choose Him to be yours, you shall be His again. You shall be His again.

So, let us express our choice, our love, our trust together in these beautiful words. Together:

“The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. 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. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 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 23:1–6.

May God add His blessing, and fill all our hearts with that abundant satisfaction which it is His joy to bestow.

Is there one here this morning that, in a special sense, would like to be remembered in prayer as we close this service? Jesus hears prayer, my friends. Yes, yes, yes. Is there another? Yes, my brother; you, my brother, you sister. Oh, Jesus loves to hear prayer. Yes. Jesus will hear you, and He will hear us in your behalf.

Shall we bow our heads?

Precious Lord, bless these whose hearts reach out after Thee. Abundantly satisfy every longing soul. Just now, may Thy good Spirit enter in and dwell. And may we rejoice in the loving fellowship of the Shepherd, Who gave His life for the sheep. We ask it in His name, amen.

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