



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – May 25, 2024

The Lord be with you.

What do you think about in those first early moments of your day before you throw off the covers and your feet hit the floor? What is it that you're thinking about?

I'm asking that because it's, it's proven that what you and I think about first in our day has a way of setting the tone for the rest of the day, affecting the way that we're going to think, feel and act during our day. Look at David in the book of Psalms and see there that David that well, the very first thing in the morning, David. David likes to think about God and God's loving care in his life. So what I try to do, I, I'm not saying that I always do it.

But, but what I try to do is in those first moments of my day, in that early morning quiet, I'd like to think my way through either the Lord's prayer or Psalm 23 the beautiful shepherd psalm. And this morning, hey, I was thinking my way through Psalm 23 thinking how the Lord is my shepherd. I lack for nothing. He leads me beside still waters. And, and then, you know, I, I was stopped in my tracks. I was gripped by the words, the Lord restores my soul. And I, I, I thought about the many times in my life that the Lord has done just that the Lord restores my soul.

Allow me if you will to think aloud with you for the next few moments on this incredible testimony of David, this incredible truth of life, the Lord restores my soul. The Hebrew word translated soul is the word ephesh. That's in E P H E S H. It is a word that has a rich multifaceted meaning in scripture.

Ephesh is not used in a sense that we use the word soul today as being that immaterial immortal part of us, whether throughout the Hebrew scriptures, ephesh refers to life, to life force, to the being, to the essence, to the vital breath of a person. For instance, Ephesh is used in the creation story in Genesis chapter two verse seven where it says that God formed Adam out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils, the breath of life and Adam became an ephesh a living being.

So the so the rich word ephesh, it, it really encompasses the whole being the whole person. It is holistic as it includes everything that animates us, our emotions, our desires, our will, and the Lord restores that the word we store as well as what it it, it means that something in us was broken, depleted, worn out. And God brings back life.



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Literally, the text reads, the Lord causes my nephew my life force to return notice here that it is the Lord who restores. It's not you or me.

And you know, I look back over my life and I see them many times where I lay broken, depleted, empty. And it was the Lord who picked me up. It was a lord who breathed his very life into me. The it was the lord who got me going and it is a lord who keeps be going. The Lord leads me in right paths. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

I mean, it's the Lord's doing. And was that thought that well, it just gripped my waking moments this morning and, and just kind of set the tone for the day. And I wanted to tell you about it. The Lord restores my soul.

Philip Keller was a shepherd who's written a wonderful best seller, called a Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23 and was from Philip Keller's Shepherd experience that he writes. And in his book, he talks about a cast sheep, a cash sheep. It is one that has fallen over on its back. It's unable to write itself, it's unable to get up. It is completely helpless on its back, vulnerable to wolves and other dangers.

Ok, I want to read to you now a passage from colors book in which he describes searching for and finding a cast sheep. Here's what he says. I read:

As soon as I reached the cash sheep, my very first impulse was to pick it up tenderly, I would roll the sheep over on its side, then straddling the sheep with my legs. I would hold her erect, rubbing her limbs to restore circulation to her legs. This often took quite a little time when the sheep started to walk again. She often just stumbled, staggered and collapsed in a heap. Once more.

All the time, I worked on the cash sheep. I would talk to it gently. Always couched in language that combined tenderness and rebuke compassion and correction. Little by little, the sheep would regain its equilibrium. It would start to walk steadily and surely by and by. It would dash away to rejoin the others set free from its fears and frustrations. So this morning in my waking hours, I thought about my life and the many times, well, I've been a cash sheep and the Lord restores my very life and the Lord keeps me going.

Our loving Father, we thank you that you are our shepherd who always cares for us always leads us in right paths. Sometimes we are cash sheep were fallen broken, depleted as the trials and troubles of life leave us empty and you find us, you find us and you restore our very lives. We thank you that we can know that your goodness and mercy will follow us all the way home where we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thank you for listening. Until next time.