

Psalm 23 is a “song of trust” that begins with a simple, yet powerful, grounding confession: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.” From a Christian view of the world, this is not sentimental poetry- it is covenantal reality. The God who gathers us is the same God who creates, sustains, and tends all of God’s creation. To belong to the Shepherd is to be placed within a world that God loves and refuses to abandon. Acts 2 gives us a picture of what happens when that belonging takes root in a community. The early church “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. All who believed were together and had all things in common.” Their life together was marked by shared resources, daily gratitude, and a reverence for what God had given. This was not only spiritual devotion-it was a reordering of life that resisted scarcity and honored abundance. They lived as if “I shall not want” were actually true. What about us? Can any of us say with absolute confidence “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” I shall not want can also be translated as “I lack nothing.” We live as though we don’t trust these words to be true. We also confuse needs with wants. Sure we can blame consumerism and advertising or keeping up with the Jones’; however, what does it look like for us to trust that the Lord really is our shepherd? What does it look like for us to trust that God will supply our every need? What does it look for us to take accountability for our overconsumption?

Let’s think about the economy of the psalms and of the Book of Acts for a moment. They run counter- against- “our prevailing economies which

play upon our felt needs with all manner of false covenant, promising a wholeness and a satisfaction that is ours for the taking by way of one more impulse to buy” (J. David Dark, *FOW*). Whereas, we’re told in Psalm 23 and numerous times by Jesus that in God’s abiding presence we lack no good thing. That’s easy to read or hear but hard to live. “In a consumer-oriented society, it is extremely difficult to hear the simple but radical message that God is the only necessity of life. We’re challenged by these words “I shall not want” when surrounded by a culture that teaches people to want everything. Driven by greed rather than need, some of us can hardly imagine having only the necessities of life: food, drink, shelter, protection” (John E. White, *FOW*). While others of us struggle to have our basic needs met, even in Christian community. We’re a stressed people, regardless of our social status. Some of us worry about having enough money to pay our bills each month or to have income at all. Some of us are stressed about our health or our living situation or our relationships. Many of us are searching to find meaning-purpose- in our lives. Creation is also stressed. Supply and demand. We have stripped and over developed the land. We have polluted the water and the air. We live and operate as if we’ll never run out of the earth’s resources. We take more than we need. We don’t believe the scientist’s warnings. We are an everyone for themselves society. Isn’t that what Jesus taught us?! NO! “In our culture, which clings to the myth of ‘rugged individualism’ and ‘self-made’ people, the psalmist instead proclaims the truth- none of us is ‘self-made.’ None of us is strong and independent. We are God-made, utterly dependent upon God, as sheep are dependent upon the shepherd. Yes, we work,

save, study, and plan, by God is ultimately the one who meets our needs. God is the one who makes us rest. God is the one who slows us down and restores our very being” (Jeff Paschal, *FOW*).

As followers of Christ, stewardship is not ownership; it is trust. The earth is the Lord’s, and we are its caretakers. Creation is not a backdrop to salvation; it is the arena in which God’s glory is revealed and in which our discipleship is lived. When we neglect the land, exploit resources, or ignore the fragile balance of ecosystems, we are not just making poor choices- we are forgetting who the Shepherd is and what kind of pasture we’ve been given. The poet Mary Oliver once asked in her poem, *The Summer Day*, “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” For the Christian, that life is not abstract- it is lived among soil and water, neighbor and creature. It is lived in daily decisions that either honor or diminish the goodness of creation. Another poet, Wendell Berry, reminds us, “The earth is what we all have in common” (*The Long-Legged House*). That commonality echoes the life of the early church, where no one claimed private ownership of what ultimately belonged to God. Easier said than lived, isn’t it?! We make excuses as to why it’s “mine, mine, mine” and why we hang on to or claim ownership of things that aren’t really ours. The psalmist tells us in the next psalm (24) that “the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and those who live in it” (v.1). Everything is God’s. Everything. We are stewards, not owners. That means that “enough” is not about how much we can accumulate; it’s about how faithfully we manage what belongs to God! Therefore, creation care, including caring for one another, is not an optional add-on to faith or a “woke” term; it is an

expression of trust in the Shepherd who provides. It is a way of living Acts 2 in a Psalm 23 world-receiving what God gives with gratitude, sharing it with justice, and tending it with humility. It is lying down in green pastures and beside still waters without too much anxiety, because we know they are not ours to consume but rather, they are gifts to cherish.

The question before us is not whether God will remain faithful to creation. The question is whether we, as Christ's body, will live as if we believe that faithfulness is enough. Will we walk gently in the pasture? Will we keep the waters still? Will we allow our life together to reflect the abundance of the One who restores our souls and who provides for Her sheep? It reminds me of a song we've sung here at Triune before. I've heard it in my head all week. It's called *Jireh*. The word *jireh* is a Hebrew word meaning "will see" or "will provide." It comes from Genesis (22:14) when Abraham is about to sacrifice his son, Issaac, and God provides a ram instead. Abraham then names the place "Jehovah Jireh," The Lord will provide. The chorus of the song echoes in my head. "You are Jireh, you are enough. Jireh, you are enough. And I will be content in every circumstance. You are Jireh, you are enough. Forever enough. Always enough. More than enough." Pastor Trevor this past week also reminded me of another Hebrew word that I heard just a few weeks ago at a Bible Study at Village Engage. One of the participants was Jewish, which was really cool. She reminded us of the Jewish understanding of having enough. "Enough" isn't mainly about a number or a limit- it's about a posture of the heart before God, often expressed through the Hebrew idea of contentment, sufficiency, and gratitude for

what is given. Therefore, they sing a word in the Passover song at the Seder, where each act of God's deliverance is named as sufficient on its own. The point isn't that Israel didn't need more- it's that each gift is worthy of gratitude without demanding excess. This Hebrew word, *dayenu* (דַּיֵּנוּ), which means "it would have been enough for us," is sung at the end of each act. In Jewish faith, "enough" means: **trusting** God's provision, **receiving** with gratitude, **resisting** the pull of excess, **ensuring** others are provided for. It's not about settling for less- it's about recognizing that life with God is already abundant, and learning to live within that abundance faithfully. The point is that they sing this reminder in community so that they never will forget God's abundant love and provision. Sounds closely aligned with what we as followers of Christ are taught to do. These same themes- trust, gratitude, restraint, and justice- are taken up and reframed through Christ, covenant, and grace. And yet, we choose scarcity over a God of Abundance. As Christians we must recognize that everything we have from God is a gift, not an achievement. In Christ, **we already have enough because we have been given everything necessary for life with God.** "Enough" is grounded not in circumstances, but in **grace that is sufficient** (2 Corinthians 12:9). This guards against both anxiety ("I don't have enough") and pride ("I earned what I have"). One theologian warns us that the human heart is a "factory of idols," constantly turning "more" into a substitute for God (John Calvin). So "enough" becomes a matter of discipleship: learning to receive without clinging; enjoying creation without worshiping it; and practicing contentment as an act of trust, which brings us back to the text.

In the Book of Acts, we're provided with a picture of a Spirit-formed community where needs are met, resources are shared, and gratitude replaces fear. Luke's vision is of a Christ community where all members have their basic needs met; where there will be enough food for all and the basic needs of life will be available for all. This isn't socialism. This is an ancient story referring to an even older story. It is, in sense, a return to Eden, where the first humans had their food and needs for life provided for by God" (Sharon Betsworth, *WP*). This is also a community that "resists some of the hierarchical, dominating, exploitative, and violent organizing principles of Rome. Rather than mimicking Rome and taking away what people need, this community shares so that everyone has what they need. Rather than despising the common, this community co-creates the common. Rather than using wealth to make others more vulnerable to death, this community uses wealth to develop more opportunities for life" (Jeremy L. Williams, *WP*). This is a God-trusting community of mutual aid. A community where salvation is not just individual. A community where "enough" is never private. A community where if our neighbor lacks daily bread, then our "enough" is called into question. "Their companionship (bread sharing) protects, comforts, nourishes, and restores them. Since each is acting in response to their belief, and most likely also to the baptism that was described in the previous story" (Rhodora E. Beaton, *Connections*), community members place their confidence in God's abundant provision.

It would be easy to dismiss this Acts passage as having any sorts of demands for our contemporary ears. "After all, the entire description seems rather idyllic, a utopian Christian community living an ideal

beyond our practical grasps” (Karoline M. Lewis, *Connections*). We are taught not to trust and to make excuses, aren’t we? But I wonder if the real reason we turn to cynicism or dismissal is because we are afraid to truly trust that the Lord is our shepherd and therefore, not want. “It is as if we expect to fail and so we set the bar low, justifying our inability to achieve such high standards of Christian community. Why are we willing to settle? Why are we so quick to consider this description of community as beyond our natural reach? Maybe that is the point. On our own, left to our own devices, achieving such ideals is impossible. However, with the power of the Holy Spirit, we are at the very least called to lean into this kind of community. Resurrection is not simply a personal claim that secures your after-death reality. Resurrection brings you into a community that follows Jesus in order to live as Easter people” (Lewis). To be the church, we need each other. God is an abundant God, who gives us what we need through one another. We have enough. We have an awe-inspiring community of varying economic and ethnic status who devote themselves to the teaching and practices of the apostles, fellowship, the breaking of the bread and prayers so as not to forget what God has done and continues to do and who we truly are. We are a community where we lean into one another even as the empire attempts to press in on us. Even as the brokenness of human life weaves in and out of community, “there is a glimpse of the new creation; a glimpse of the new birth given through the resurrection of Christ. These glimmers of the reign of God in this beloved community can seem so far off in sometimes, but they are as near as our worship, prayer and fellowship can take us” (Betsworth). Come, Holy Spirit, come! Amen.