

**Psalm 23**

King James version

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**

NRSV

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. He leads me in right paths for his  
name's sake.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.You prepare a table before me in the presence of my  
enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.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.

Vincent van Gogh 1884

The gift of having a psalm memorized is that we can say it slowly and find that different parts of the Psalm resonate in our hearts. Even a new translation can have a different meaning as we continue to navigate the pastures of life, looking for guidance, sometimes looking for a place of rest. Sometimes the sun warms us and sometimes we receive with gr **Tuesday, January 5, 2021** attitude the bounty of God's table—in the midst of turbulent times. Sometimes we are led through darkening skies to a place of safety and discover that all along the Beloved Shepherd was walking with us and other sheep were keeping us warm.

Another way to renew and to pray is to read the words slowly, even speaking the words out loud. Noticing what moves us is a form of praying. Can we take a moment to pray today in a different way or try something new? Our hearts are waiting...

**Unveiling Christianity**

*Another way to look at “unveiling” is as a sort of “recognition event,” where something we thought we knew reveals itself to be radically different than our long-held assumptions. Our friend and CAC teacher Reverend Cynthia Bourgeault explores how this is a gospel phenomenon, one that takes place repeatedly, especially for Jesus. When people are attuned and awake, reality is often “unveiled” for them. Cynthia suggests that this might be a necessary step for all Christians in the twenty-first century. We’ve become so used to the “story” of our faith that a veil has been pulled over our eyes and we no longer experience its power to change our lives. She writes:*

Perhaps the most deadening aspect of our Christianity . . . is that we live it with twenty-twenty hindsight. We know the story. We know how the plot comes out. We know who the winners are. . . . The Bible contains the complete and divinely authorized biography of Jesus and furnishes the complete guide to what [we] should do to become his disciple. Everything needed for [our] personal salvation is right there. . . .

We’re living in an era right now which some would call a major paradigm shift, where there’s an opportunity as perhaps there hasn’t been before to really open up the core questions again and ask, “What is it that we mean by ‘Christianity’? What is this filter [or veil] that we’re looking through? Who is this Master that we profess and confess in our life as we call ourselves Christian?” . . .

When we approach the [Jesus] story with the attitude, “I’ve heard that already, I know what that means,” we fall asleep rather than allowing ourselves to be shocked awake. . . . For all such spiritual sleepwalking bypasses that crucial first step, that moment when the heart has to find its way not through external conditioning but through a raw immediacy of presence. Only there—in “the cave of the heart,” as the mystics are fond of calling it—does a person come in contact with his or her own direct knowingness. And only out of this direct knowingness is sovereignty born, one’s own inner authority.

*Richard here: This is what Jesus offers people through his ministry—an experience of inner authority, powerful enough to heal them and set them free from whatever was keeping them trapped. Often it seems as if Jesus is simply “parting the veil” between them and God. Cynthia offers this quote from Father Bruno Barnhart:*

As we accompany Jesus through the gospels, we are present at one dramatic meeting after another. One person after another experiences a mysterious power in Jesus that, from this moment, changes the course of his or her life. If we are fully present at the moment when we read such a narrative, we ourselves experience the liberating power of this awakening. [1]

Richard Rohr Daily Meditations: January 5, 2021

**References:**

[1] Bruno Barnhart, *Second Simplicity: The Inner Shape of Christianity* (Paulist Press: 1999), 48. Bourgeault, 8–9.

Cynthia Bourgeault, *The Wisdom Jesus: Transforming Heart and Mind—a New Perspective on Christ and His Message* (Shambhala: 2008), 2, 3–4, 7.