



The following document is a rough copy of Pastor Drost' sermon notes

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✚ For the next couple of weeks, I want to share with you some thoughts from my personal quiet prayer times.

- Everyday I find a quiet place (usually early in the morning) and spend time meditating, reflecting on God’s Word and praying. It’s the most important part of my day... it’s my lifeline!
- Sometimes, not always, I stay in a passage for days... the passage we are going to look at today is Psalms 23 (The most loved and most popular Psalm in the Bible!). I reflected on this Psalm for 21 days and everyday the Spirit dropped into my heart some **wonderful life-giving treasures!**
- I saw things I had never noticed in 42 years of ministry! I have preached many (many) times using this Psalm, read wonderful books and commentaries on this Psalm and yet I discovered things I had never noticed before.

✚ So, let’s start by reading together this Psalm of David...

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Or: The LORD is my shepherd there is nothing I lack

If the LORD is your Shepherd you will have all that you need, you might not have all your “wants” but you will have all you “need”!

He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff they comfort me.

Up to this point the Psalmist is telling us that the Lord cares for us as a loving shepherd cares for his sheep... but now the analogy changes...

drawing from the culture of the time, he uses **the analogy of the relationship of an honoured guest by his host...**

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs 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

✚ Today and next Sunday we are going to center our thoughts on the first four verses that deal with the analogy of the Shepherd caring for His sheep.

✚ A few months ago, this sign caught my attention on the outside of the Super Store.

BREATHE WINE IS HERE

Now I’m going to tell you why that caught my attention in a moment. But based on that sign, I am calling this message:

BREATHE Psalms23 is HERE



+ If you have been attending our church for some time you will recall that about six years ago, I ended up in the Emergency room at the hospital with stroke levels of High Blood pressure. **It sure got my attention!** My doctor said that I could have died or taken a serious stroke.

- That put me on a journey to understand what causes high blood pressure, how to avoid it, what had to change...
- That experience has been a GIFT. It has taught me so much about stress, anxiety, what it means to be driven, the importance of Sabbath, exercise, walking, quiet times of reflection, meditation, prayer, self-awareness, the importance of **having a centre of peace.**
- As I was on this journey, I remember one early morning while in my prayer time hearing the gentle inner voice of the Holy Spirit say one word: “Breathe!” I had not really read anything or paid much attention to the subject of breathing (except when I was in my late teens, I got into weightlifting for a couple years and it was used as a tool to build your muscles...).
- So, I went on a quest to discover more about breathing in connection to prayer, meditation, quieting my inner anxiety...
- I felt like the Lord took me on a personal journey discovering how to be silent, meditate and confess scripture, ancient Christian Spiritual Practices like Lection Divina, Practicing the Presence, The Daily Examen, the Jesus Prayer, and others.
- It’s amazing what I discovered in God’s Word and by listening to His leading about waiting on God, being silent in His presence, meditating, listening and breathing. (I used to think that meditation and breathing was something only Hindus did!)
- I discovered, while in prayer on my Sabbatical, a simple breathing exercise that has helped me so much in moments of anxiety over the past few years. Let me share it with you:

1) **I chose a key phrase from scripture** key to my situation.

Like: “Do not be afraid” (Explain)

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart” (Explain)

- Why scripture? His Word brings life!
- What scripture? Let the Spirit whisper something to your heart

I breathe in slowly and say that passage as I exhale (several times).

Letting that scripture become breath to me!

I can do this anywhere when I start feeling anxiety, fear or upset...

Just that practice dropped my blood pressure by about 5 points and has helped me become more aware of His living presence

Would you like to try it with me?

(When I asked you to read with me you did a great job!)

a) Let’s pick a passage from scripture...

In **Matthew 14** the disciples are caught in a storm (Wind and waves are overcoming their boat). It's the middle of the night.

Have you ever found yourself in the middle of the night overcome by waves of thoughts, worry, fear, anxiety?

Then Jesus comes walking on the waves and says to them:

"Do not be afraid" (Matthew 14:27) That's our breathing line!

b) Now it's time to learn a little about breathing...

Now just to be clear, I'm not a breathing expert (Not a breathing coach) but here are some thoughts related to scripture:

– When God created the first humans this is what it says...

"The LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (Heb: *néph-esh*)." Genesis 2:7

The Hebrew word for soul is the word "*néph-esh*" which literally means "one who breathes".

So, God blew into the nostrils of the first human and his lungs filled with air and he started to breathe!

The first thing we humans did was breathe!

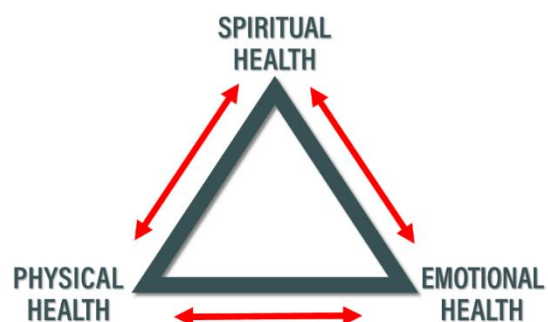
What's the first thing babies do when they are born? Breathe!

Infants breathe properly but as we grow older, anger, stress, fears, anxiety, worry cause us to breathe wrong!

- Some research suggests that up to 95% of adults breathe incorrectly: Many use only upper chest breathing verses lower chest breathing, shallow breathing (Leaving 30 to 50% of your lungs unutilised! Our vital organs are missing out on vital oxygen causing all kinds of problems).
- When we are afraid, stressed or startled our bodies move into what's called "Fight or flight" mode. Our tendency is to gasp and breathe shallow (Upper chest). The problem is that many live is a constant "fight or flight" mode, powerful hormones are constantly being released throughout the body, elevating blood pressure and placing your body in a constant state of high alert. Glucose is driven up to the brain and into the muscles.
- This results in blood pressure problems, difficulty in sleeping, jumpy thoughts, difficulty focusing, irritability, road rage, resentment, ulcers, migraines, depression, stress and all sorts of emotional, physical and even spiritual problems.
- **We are very interconnected:**
Physically, Emotionally and Spiritually
(One affects the other!)

Example: Forgiveness

- unforgiveness has serious effects on our emotional health



- unforgiveness will affect our physical health
- unforgiveness will seriously affect your spiritual health
- Fear, anxiety, anger, puts us in constant “Fight or flight” mode which causes us to breathe wrong, affecting our physical and emotional health and even our spiritual well being.
- **Proper breathing starts by slowing down and breathing deep, your belly and ribs should expand! Your shoulders and neck should not move!**
- ❖ **TRY IT NOW... SIT UP STRAIGHT... breathe in through your nose (Right down to your tummy) and breathe out through your mouth... **That’s how God designed you to breathe!****

Now let’s add our passage from scripture while you exhale!

“Do not be afraid”

Again, **the scripture adds that spiritual power of God’s Word** affecting your spiritual health, and your emotional health and your physical health. (Without it the breathing will benefit you emotionally/physically but not spiritually)

But when you quiet your spirit, your emotions, your mind and your body and BREATHE in and out His truth, His Word, it gives life to all your BEING!

- So now you know why the Superstore sign caught my attention **BREATHE WINE IS HERE**

✚ So, what does this have to do with Psalms 23?

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. **He makes me** lie down in green pastures. **He leads me** beside the still waters. **He restores my soul.** **He leads me** in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Nothing to do with **BREATHING** **IF** you read it in English! But David wrote this in Hebrew, AND when you read it in Hebrew you can see that the word “SOUL” is that same word that appears in Genesis (“*néph-esh*”), **He restores my BREATH!**

He RESTORES my physical, emotional and spiritual BREATH!

(BREATHE) **“I can breathe again!”**

How does He do it?

The Good Shepherd way of giving you back your BREATH

1) He has to be my Shepherd

The Lord is my shepherd...

Is He really your Shepherd?

- You go to homes and see Psalms 23 on the walls...
- Funerals...
- **But is He really everyone’s Shepherd? YOURS?**

Jesus said John 10...

“I am the good shepherd.” John 10:11a (NIV)

Then He said...

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” John 10:27

The true test off whether He is your shepherd is when he calls you to do something? The word shepherd implies leadership “He leads me” ... and I follow him...

In order for Him to restore your breath He must be your Shepherd and you must follow Him!

2) **He MAKES me** lie down in green pastures.

True shepherds MAKE sheep do things!

If He is my Shepherd, HE MAKES me!

What does He make me do?

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

If you want Him to restore your breath you will have to be willing to stop, lie down, pause and rest! “I don’t want to take a Sabbath to breathe” “I have too much to do!” “I can’t afford it”

3) **He leads me** beside the still waters.

“Be still and know that I am God” Psalm 46:10a

Finding quiet moments to just be silent, quiet, present in the presence of God. Away from noise, away from gadgets, screens, away from podcast, text, Facebook, and just be still... our souls are renewed, our breath is restored, the storms of life are quieted.

“My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my hope is from Him.” Psalm 62:5

The Shepherd calls us to quiet waters! To wait in silence!

To be still! And there...

He restores my soul (My breath! I can breathe again!).

We live in a world of constant distractions, constant stimuli, constant noise, beeps and tweets, bells and reminders, screens and clamor competing for our attention...

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. **HE RESTORES MY SOUL**. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.