

"God is good, All the time" Psalm 23, John 10:11-18 (07/27/25)

“God is good, all the time” — this is a phrase used a lot by many Christians. Through this simple phrase, many people receive comfort and encouragement. Even when pain and challenges come into life, this phrase — “God is good, all the time” — helps people overcome difficulties and find strength again.

But as Christians, are we truly confessing this from our hearts? Or are we just proclaiming it when we find ourselves in situations beyond our control?

I may not be that old, but I’ve lived long enough as an adult to get a definition of what life is about. While there have certainly been good moments in my life, my overall experience tells me that life is a cycle of challenges and overcoming. There are always difficulties in life. Then, how can we say, “God is good, all the time”?

Today’s Scripture, Psalm 23, is one of the most famous psalms in the Bible. Even those who are not interested in the Bible may have heard this Psalm 23. It says, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” It is a passage often read to those facing challenges when they need comfort or encouragement.

This Psalm 23 has also given me great strength. But as I continued to experience repeated challenges in my life, I began to ask. “Does Psalm 23 really apply to me?” “Why does God allow so many challenges and difficulties in my life?” “Why could not God just prevent these darkest valleys altogether?” These questions began to stir in my heart.

Earlier this month, as I stayed home and meditated on God’s Word, God helped me understand the deeper meaning of Psalm 23. Through today’s psalm

and Gospel Scriptures, I hope to share how we can sincerely proclaim, “God is good, all the time.”

Before diving into the message of Psalm 23, we must understand who wrote it. In the Bible, some psalms include an explanation that indicates the author. And we can see an explanation at the top of Psalm 23. It says, “A Psalm of David.”

This means David wrote this psalm, and it is assumed he wrote it after becoming king. To understand this psalm better, we should first understand David’s life. As you may know, David overcame many difficulties and challenges before he became king. He had to run from Saul and sometimes he nearly lost his life. Even after becoming king, his life was not easy. He lost his child because of his own sin. And he was betrayed by his own sons when he was a king. David’s life was far from easy. However, interestingly, David is one of the people who received a very important covenant from God.

Before we continue to talk about the Bible, I want to briefly mention American history. Let’s talk about Abraham Lincoln. Even some people who do not know much about U.S. history know his name. Although I was born and raised in South Korea, I knew of Abraham Lincoln from a young age. He is well known for helping abolish slavery and leading the North to victory in the Civil War.

Then, how many of you have heard of Jefferson Davis? Perhaps some of you who enjoy history are familiar with the name. I only learned about him while researching for this sermon. Jefferson Davis was the president of the Confederate States of America, the side that lost the Civil War. I hadn’t heard much about him before and only came to know his story recently.

History tends to be written from the victor’s perspective, highlighting

glorious and positive stories. But the Bible, in contrast, records many stories about challenges and difficulties.

From beginning to end, the Bible reveals God's glory, but much of it is a continuous narrative of suffering. God created the world in love, but creation fell into sin. God called Abraham to leave his home, but his life was filled with wandering. God saved the people of Israel from Egypt, but they lived 40 years in the wilderness. The Israelites eventually settled in the Promised Land, but they forgot God, worshiped idols, and ended up in exile.

Jesus came to this earth, died for us, rose again, and sent the Holy Spirit. But the church and Christians suffered externally under Roman persecution and internally had many conflicts.

Even without looking at the whole Bible story, just David's life reveals that his life was not always good. So how could David confess, "Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life"? And why did God make a covenant with such an imperfect person like David?

As I meditated on this psalm and prepared for this sermon, I realized something important. Psalm 23 was not written just to comfort or encourage others. Psalm 23 was a personal confession of faith from David to God.

When I read Psalm 23 before, I focused on those parts of the psalm: "I lack nothing" (v.1) "He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters" (v.2) "He refreshes my soul... guides me along the right paths" (v.3) "I will fear no evil... they comfort me" (v.4) "My cup overflows" (v.5)

But the most important part is in verse 4. This important part is, "You are with me."

Isn't that something we have heard a lot over the past year? Because this psalm is David's psalm to God, he says, "God is with me." This is the core of the gospel I emphasized. "God is with us."

God is good, not because life is easy or because everything always goes well. God is good because God is with us in every situation and every circumstance. David knew this really well.

Before becoming king, while he was running away from Saul, David had a perfect opportunity to kill Saul in a cave. Saul went into a cave to take a rest. And David was hiding in this cave to hide from Saul. David could finish his suffering at this chance. It was a great opportunity for David. But David chose not to kill Saul, saying he could not harm the anointed by God. For David, God's presence mattered more than his circumstances, more than what seemed good or beneficial.

God came to this earth in a human body to be with us. Jesus was born into this world, suffered as we suffer, and experienced death, all to show that God is with us.

In today's gospel Scripture, Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd, and says the good shepherd can give his life for the sheep. In our neighborhood, people sometimes said they had seen wolves, and there are ranches and shepherds here, too. But in the present day, a good shepherd does not mean someone who risks their life fighting off a wolf. If you see any wolves or dangerous wild animals, you should run away!

But what if a wolf or wild animal threatened our family or children? Would we run away and leave them behind? Even if we could not defeat the animal, we

would choose to fight the animal to the death to protect our loved ones.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd because He considers us his family, his children. Jesus is with us, even in situations where He should give His life.

And in fact, Jesus did sacrifice himself for us. He rose again so that we would not be left as orphans, and he is still with us today.

God is always good because God is with us in every situation. When we face hardships or problems in life, those situations can indeed be very difficult. We cannot always say with certainty how God will resolve those problems. But one thing is sure. God is with us even in the midst of our difficulties. Jesus Christ is with us. He is God who was persecuted and gave God's very life for us. This is a sure and unchanging truth. As we begin this week, I hope this becomes the confession of all of us: "God is good, all the time, for you are with me." Amen.