

Intro: This past week we all had great news as we watched the soccer team in Thailand be rescued from the cave. They spent almost two weeks and the only way they got out was by being literally attached to one lead diver, followed another. They found their way to safety because they were “led” along the right path!

PICTURE HERE

That is what David says God does for us as His children as we walk with Him through life. He LEADS us in the paths of Righteousness! Just like they were attached to the diver that led them to safety, so we, if we stay “attached” to God, can be led in the right path as well!

Psalm 23:3 Pg 392

In the book “A Shepherd Looks At the 23rd Psalm Phillip Keller tells us, a shepherd LEADS the sheep...he never drives them! Sheep are very skittish, very temperamental, very easily spooked. So if you drive them they panic and scatter, even hurt themselves. Instead, the shepherd leads the way...and they choose to follow him along the path so that they end up in the right place
So, a couple of thoughts about this section of Psalm 23

1. God Leads us in the Path of Righteousness.

As we think about that, there are two things I want to say about the Path.

David calls it “The Path of Righteousness.” You can think about that two ways.

a. *The Character of the Path:* This talks about the KIND of path God leads His people on.

Lit = It is the “right” path; the straight path; the safe path.

There are paths that are not right. They are not straight, they are not safe

Those are the kinds of paths we choose for ourselves!

Illus: Like the Prodigal son...He had a path, but it wasn't a path that led to the right place, or was safe, or was good

b. *The End Result of the Path:* This talks about the destination of the path

God leads us along a path that leads to the right end result! He wants to lead us to :

Righteousness: Lit = *Holiness, Purity, Right living:*

Ultimately, He wants to lead us to Himself!

Illus: Bible says, Pr 14:12 “*There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.*”

Applic: Just like the Navy Seals led the children to safety, guiding them along the RIGHT path, to the RIGHT destination God wants to do that in our lives. We are just like those kids sometimes. We don't know the right way, we don't know how to get to the right destination, but if we will stay connected to Him...He will lead us on the RIGHT path!

SO THEN, THE QUESTION IS, HOW??? HOW DOES GOD LEAD US?

One of the best studies I know about that is called, Experiencing God! Fantastic, whole section on How God leads His children.

5 Ways God Leads Us

“God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, Circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.”

1. Holy Spirit: This is the still small voice we feel, Dr Black, more profound than words, inner feeling, conviction, inclination

Joh 16:13 “*But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.*”

It's good that I am going away, I am sending a counselor...Holy Spirit

Lives within us; He is in “link” between our heart and God's (Diving Picture)

He helps us understand the bible, He gives us guidance, “leading” when we pray and ask for help...ect

2. Prayer: This is when we are talking to God...AND when we are listening, Talking and asking we understand

That is why silence is so important. We have to LISTEN! Elijah, still small voice...cant hear it!!!

Rick Amato, “For 40 years I have been praying...and I, guy knows nothing, have been doing all the talking, and never listening to the One who knows everything! How crazy is that!!!

Jer 29:12 “*Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.*”

Psalm 40:1 “*He leaned over to me and listened to my cry!*”

3. Bible: Psalm 119:105 “*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*”

God uses the bible to reveal to us His will. Most of it is very clear..not hard to understand: Eph 5:1-4

But, even though it is objective, usually very clear, we can still mess up. Sometimes we can take and twist our desires

Illus: George Whitefield: Great man of God, amazing preacher, great leader: Son, Read Luke Great preacher (died!)

So...we always have to keep in mind, that even when we feel like the HS has led us through the bible...can be wrong

4. Circumstances: These are the opportunities, “open doors”, coincidences, serendipities that come our way

God sometimes uses those, makes it very clear.

Illus: Foundation of work in Cuba: Pastor on way to meet with Gov't official, bike broke down, Little old lady

Illus: Sometimes though, it is NOT God's leading! Open door doesn't mean God: 2Cor 2:12-13

5. Church/Others: We are created and called into community. Much of what God wants to do in us he often does through that. Many of us don't understand that. We think that our relationship with God is personal...private...and in some ways it is. But the reality is that God's chosen method of work in the world in His Church.

Illus; Think of this. Almost every one of those verses that we memorize in the NT...certainly all of them in the epistles...were written to a church! Other than Philemon...the epistles.

God uses church...to lead us and guide us! Like with any other area of leading, it can go wrong...but you can't throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Applic: Gifts: 1Co 12:7-8 *"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit"*

CONCL: God leads us as His children in paths of righteousness. I regularly talk with people who are almost immobilized by the fear that they aren't doing what God wants them to do. Here is the reality. That is possible. Sometimes we ignore Him!!!

But...When God wants us to do something...He lets us know! No one is going to get to heaven and hear God say, "You are in trouble because you didn't do what I said, and then respond...but I didn't know!" If we say that, then I'm convinced he will say, really? Didn't you hear the announcement that said, "We need kids workers, and isn't your gift teaching, and didn't you think to yourself, I could do that...I should do that...but then you decided NOT to?"

Tonight...take a few moments...and Listen...God...what are YOU leading ME to do?