My Cup Runneth Over

Introduction: The Bible is like a fathomless well; there is no limit to its resources. That is certainly true of Psalm 23. Every time you look at it, God has something new and fresh for your soul. Every phrase has become a message in and of itself. Let’s read these words again:

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. (2) HE maketh me to lie down in green pastures: HE leadeth me beside the still waters. (3) HE restoreth my soul: HE leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (4) 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. (5) Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: THOU anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. (6) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

In this message we come a 3rd time to verse 5 and focus our attention on the last phrase, "My cup runneth over.”

However before we do so, please notice again verse 3, “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.” That phrase “for His name's sake.” is interesting for as you go through this Psalm you find seven compound names of God implied here.

Verse 1 “The Lord is my shepherd.” In the Hebrew He is Jehovah-Roi. He is the shepherd that will lead me all the days of my life. My friend that in itself is thrilling, that my God shall lead me all the days of my life. The Bible tells us:

He is the Good Shepherd that gives His life for the sheep.
He is the Great Shepherd that intercedes for us.
He is the Chief Shepherd that one day will come for us.

Verse 1 “I shall not want” refers to the name of God, Jehovah-Jireh, meaning the Lord will provide.
Verse 2 “He leadeth me besides still waters” refers to God as Jehovah-Shalom meaning the Lord our peace.
Verse 3 “He restoreth my soul” would refer to God as is Jehovah-Rapha meaning the Lord that healeth.
Verse 3 “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness” refers to our God as Jehovah-Tsidkenu meaning the Lord our righteousness.
Verse 4 “Thou art with me” is speaking of our God as Jehovah-Shammah meaning the ever-present Lord.
Verse 5 “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” This would refer to God as our Jehovah-Nissi meaning the Lord our banner.

What a tremendous Psalm, giving to us in summary seven of the great compound names of God mentioned in the Old Testament. Everything that the Shepherd is to the sheep, God is to His people. God offers His people the intimacy of His presence.

Reading Psalm 23 you get the impression that all is well in the life of David. All is well as:
He mentions wants, but they no longer exist.
He mentions dangers, but they are without terror.
He mentions enemies, but they are enemies without powers.

As such, the writer comes to verse 5 and he seems to rear back and shout "my cup runneth over." Then in verse 6 he continues that shout, "My cup runneth over with the goodness and mercy of God." This is one of the FIVE times that David uses this little personal pronoun my in the Psalm.

He says in verse 1 the "Lord is MY Shepherd."
He says in verse 3 "He restoreth MY soul."
He says the Lord in verse 5 "anoints MY head with oil."
He says in verse 5 "MY cup runneth over."
He says in verse 6 "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of MY life."

It is all personal. That's why we ask, “Can you say the Lord is MY shepherd?” If you can say that, then all is well with your soul.

Now David comes to verse 5 and says "My cup runneth over." When David wrote these words, he was not referring to a little challis in his hand. He was talking about something far more significant than a little cup. It was something of infinite greater value.

From this phrase, I want to mention FOUR CUPS found in the Bible. Three of them every one of us should drink, the fourth no Christian should ever put to his lips.

First: There is the Cup of Blessing. The cup of blessing is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 10:16 where we read, “The CUP of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”

The cup of blessing talks to us of the blessing of the Lord. Even the Psalmist said in Psalm 23:6 “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.”

David said, “Goodness and mercy shall follow me”. They are like God's sheep-dogs baying, "Goodness! Mercy! Goodness! Mercy! They drive me to the Saviour. God does want to bless is children.

When you come to the house of God, I think He is saying, "I want to bless that person."
When you come to the time of devotions in Bible reading and prayer, I think He is saying, "I want to bless that person."
When you live in holiness of life, I believe that God is saying, “I want to bless that person.”
When you are living in the will of God, I believe God is saying “I want you to have your cup running over with blessings.”
When you are servicing others and not trying to be served, I believe God is saying, “I want to bless that person.”
When you come to those times where sin comes in and where unrighteousness abounds, I believe God is saying, “I want to show that person that I have mercy for that person.”

It's hard to believe that people ignore the blessings of the Lord, and even the possibility of blessings.
Often, God's people are so occupied with the difficult and unpleasant things of life that they fail to count their blessings. Often we keep our eyes upon others and complain and fuss and gripe that we don't look up and really see how good God is in all his blessings in our life. Remember James 1:17 tells us that, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Don't let Satan rob you of your blessings. I believe, he is robbing us when we gripe, complain, gossip and let apathy set in upon us. Satan gets the upper hand.

How do we know when the Devil is getting the upper hand in our midst? There is no doubt about it, but I can sense the invisible presence of the adversary.

There is heaviness in one's spirit, a lingering realization that what we are dealing with is more than another human being could be causing.

There are the unexplainable superhuman feelings of oppression that bear down on the mind.

During these attacks, our attempts to pray and even read the Bible are strangely thwarted. It's eerie! Sometimes there are wicked thoughts and even the inability to sleep.

But, oh, how grateful I am that in Christ we have a shelter, a refuge, a shield, and a fortress. God has something better for a Christian than to go through life with his/her head dragging the ground.

The cup that runneth over refers to cold water so refreshing to a weary sheep's parched tongue. Sometimes the shepherd would have to draw water from a deep well. It was a mark of special kindness when the shepherd would work to keep the cups of water filled for the thirsty sheep.

And how lavishly our heavenly Father provides! What bounty! What abundance! Ephesians 3:20 describes our Shepherd-God as One who does, "exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think." Not just barely, but abundantly! Listen to this:

With Him the calf is always the fatted calf;
With Him the robe is always the best robe;
With Him the joy is unspeakable; and
With Him the peace passes understanding.

There is no grudging in God's goodness. He does not measure His goodness by drops like a druggist filling a prescription. It comes to us in floods. If only we recognize the lavish abundance of His gifts, what a difference it would make in our lives! If every meal were taken as a gift from His hand, it would be almost a sacrament."

May God give us a fresh realization of His overwhelming abundance He provides! Indeed, our cup of blessing does overflow.

Second: There is the Cup of Service: This cup is mentioned in Matthew 10:42. When the disciples came back from one of their campaigns, Jesus said to them, "If anybody gives you a cup of cold water in the name of the Lord, he will be blessed for it." This speaks of a cup of service.

I believe every Christian who has drunk the cup of blessing ought to be drinking of the cup of service for the Lord. Don't be like the drones of a beehive; that don't do anything. I believe saved people ought to do something for the Lord! Give somebody else a drink of water.
You can provide times of hospitality to those who we invite as guests to minister to us.
You can reach out to a neighbor or neighbors to reach them for Christ.
You can reach out to someone who is today having difficulties in their life and either help them in some way or even just lift their spirit.
You can write a letter to a Christian worker or missionary or even another Christian helping to encourage them.

Keep in mind that the cup of service should go hand-in-hand with the cup of blessing.

I will never forget reading a true story which took place during the civil war.

One day lying out on the battle field was a soldier. His cry could be heard from both camps, "Water! Water! Give me Water!" No one paid attention to his cry. Finally a soldier from the other side said, "I am going to give that man a drink of water, if it is the last thing I do."

His buddies said to him, "If you go out there to that bloody battle-field, you will be shot down the moment you leave this trench." The man said, "I cannot stand the cry of a man begging for water while he is dying."

He climbed out of the trench with no gun and with a little canteen in his hand. He went out, took off his coat, bent down, lifted up the head of an enemy soldier, and gave him a drink of water. It is said when that happened, from both camps there came thundering applause of soldiers of two different armies because a man risked his life to take a dying man a drink of water.

My friends, there are so many people in this world who need some water to drink. Let us take it to them. Remember that the Lord said, "Even a cup of cold water..."

That is such an insignificant thing. Water does not cost anything. Water is free! But the Lord said even this little thing shall not go without reward.

- Even a little thing of going out of your way to greet someone you don't know here at church.
- Even a little thing of saying preacher instead of me being visited give me a name of someone I can visit and encourage today.
- Even a little thing of visiting someone in the hospital.
- Even a little thing of taking a baked good to another family in the church as a way of cheering them up.

There are far greater needs in the lives of people of this church. Your pastor wishes as any father of a family would to reach out and provide the needs of each and every individual in our church. But there are just too many people and needs, therefore the Lord desires of you to help by reaching out with a symbolic cup of water.

I believe the problem is that Christians are not thinking so much about the needs of some other heart. We get so wrapped up in our own needs that we forget to drink the cup of service.

Third: There is the Cup of Sorrow. David was experiencing the cup of blessing. However, it was not always like that. There was a day when his kingdom was split by his own son. That handsome man, Absalom, divided his father's kingdom, brought about a civil war, caused the death of thousands of people and literally broke his father's heart.
After Absalom was slain, David cried as we read in II Samuel 18:33 “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!” David did have his days of drinking the cup of sorrow.

Jesus drank that cup. One day the disciples got into an argument. In Mark 10:35-41 we read,

“Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask." (36) "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. (37) They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." (38) "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" (39) "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, (40) but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared." (41) When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.

James & John said, "Lord when you get in your kingdom, we think one of us ought to sit on your right hand and the other on your left."

The other disciples did not like the idea. They thought, "They do not have any more right to that position than we do." So the Lord had to remind James & John of an important truth when He said, "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" In a little while I will be kneeling in the garden of Gethsemane:

   with such agony in my soul,
   with such loneliness,
   with such pressure, and
   with such sorrow that blood will pour from the pores of my body. Can you drink that cup?

And so it was that in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus, in terribly agony of soul, cried in Matthew 26:39, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt.”

Listen, my friends, people are called to drink the cup of sorrow. "THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS LIFE WITHOUT SORROW." You might be thinking, "Pastor,

   I have a good job,
   I am a child of God,
   My family is intact, and
   The sun is shining in my life and on my home."

That might be true today, but that will not always be true. There is going to come a day when sorrow will come upon you in one form or another. Thank God, the wonderful thing about life is you can be ready for sorrow, for our God has a way of enabling you to bear it, or to walk through it, or to escape it.

Fourth: There is the Cup of Compromise. We have spoken of three cups that a Christian can have: “the cup of BLESSING, the cup of SERVICE and the cup of SORROW. “

But there is one cup that no Christian should ever partake, and that is the cup of compromise. In I Corinthians 10:21 we read “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.” Here me! You cannot drink both!

   You cannot be a good Christian and be associated with heathen, or false gods. You
cannot drink both. You cannot live in the world as a Christian with a clear testimony and live like the world.

In I John 2:15 we read, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (17) And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”

In James 4:4 we read, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

You cannot be a compromiser. You cannot walk the fence as a Christian. You either are going to drink the Lord’s cup or the devil's cup, only one…not both.

I have watched this over the years with sadness of heart. Christians saying they are Christians, and yet at the same time living like the devil.

I have watched over the years good people who are Christians, and yet at the same time cause trouble within the church, division and heartache to the Pastor or the people of God.

These people go on thinking that nothing will happen to them. But things do happen. In some cases tragic things. In other cases they lose their children to the devil's crowd.

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of the devils. Oh, it would be so good if everyone would say with David in one great chorus, “My cup runneth over!”

There are wants, but they no longer exist.
There are dangers but they are without terror.
There are enemies but they are enemies without powers.

And with that the psalmists shout, “My cup runneth over as God is good and merciful all the days of my life.” Amen!

If God has spoken to your heart, after reading the sermon “My Cup Runneth Over” right now talk to God about what He has spoken to you.

Do you have the assurance that one day you will go to heaven? If you have no assurance that you know Jesus Christ, then I trust you will decide to accept Him as your personal Savior. The Bible tells us in

Acts 16:31, “...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...”
Romans 10:13, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

This prayer is here for those who need to ask Jesus to be their personal Savior: “I do want to go to Heaven. I know I am a sinner, and I do believe Jesus Christ died for me. I realize I cannot buy this great salvation, nor can I earn it. Knowing Jesus died on the cross and arose from the grave to pay my sin debt and to purchase my salvation, I do now trust Him as my Savior, and from this moment on I am completely depending on Him for my salvation.”

If you made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, let me know. Please send an e-mail to pdmikBBM@aol.com and I will send you some literature that will help you in your Christian life.

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