

St John United Church of Christ
Rev. Barbara Lohrbach
April 29, 2007

Psalm 23 **“My Cup Overflows”**

Lining out the psalm—one of the ways the psalms were sung in ancient times.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside the 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.

In our lives and in our world we are so often drawn and led to the darkness of life—the fear, the evil, the dark valley. Those are the things that sell papers and magazines and make the news at 5:30 and 10.

The 23rd Psalm reminds us of the goodness, the mercy, the comfort...the promise of our God to be with us, to anoint us, to prepare the table.

Today I want to draw us to three words in this familiar poetry—“my cup overflows”

How many times this week have we thought—“my cup overflows?”

How many times a day do we give thanks for the ways in which we are blessed?

Marnie Fisher-Ingram says:

“I have a friend who tries to take every Monday and make it a day just for praise. He tries not to ask God for anything, with the thought that we spend the rest of our days begging and pleading with God. My friend thinks that if we can give God just one day of praise, that’s at least a little something we can do.”

In a delightful book based on the 23rd Psalm, “Safe in the Shepherd’s Arms,” Max Lucado has given attention to these three words as well—“my cup overflows.” Max writes:

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Have you ever wondered why God gives so much? We could exist on far less. God could have left the world flat and gray; we wouldn't have known the difference.

*God splashed orange in the sunrise
And cast the sky in blue,
And if you love to see geese as they gather,
Chances are you'll see that too.
Did God have to make the squirrel's tail furry?
Was God obliged to make the birds sing?
And the funny way that chickens scurry
Or the majesty of thunder when it rings?
Why give a flower fragrance?
Why give food its taste?
Could it be that God loves to see
That look upon your face?*

So the next time a sunrise steals your breath or a meadow of flowers leaves you speechless, remain that way. Say nothing and listen as heaven whispers, "Do you like it? I did it just for you."

Today I want to give us the opportunity to reflect on the many ways that our cup overflows. I know that life is hard...this week as always has brought sadness, sorrow and even bad news. Through death and sickness and brokenness, lives were forever changed. That is why I believe we need so much to come to this place on Sunday to hear the good news...the good news that reminds us, we are not alone. The good news that reminds us we also have an overflowing cup of blessings.

For the next few minutes I want you to share with one another at least one blessing in your cup that overflows. Now—there is one stipulation...the blessing has to be something you cannot buy. Just for now—let's focus on the blessings that we often overlook—the taste of cold water that quenches our thirst...the fact that we can turn on a faucet and have clean water...a hug from a friend or family member...a sunrise, a sunset...the warmth of the sun on our face...the unconditional love a beloved pet gives us. Okay—you got the idea. Share with those all around you—not just the person you came with today. Let the room overflow with the sound of blessings.

Song—"Shepherd Me O God"