

PRAYER: Overflowing and generous God, we hold our cups upright. This position, of holding our cups upright allows us to realize the overflow that comes from being together with Christ in every moment, releases us from the burden that service sometimes brings. Loving God, we find ourselves able to do more than we ever imagined because our cups are always full. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, oh Lord you are our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows." - Psalm 23: 5

“DRINKING FROM THE SAUCER” This truly beautiful poem written by John Paul Moore served as a metaphor for a life overflowing with blessings.

However, there are some days you hear the tiny sound of your own empty cup. You drag yourself around the office, the nearest Starbucks, or the kitchen lethargically looking to fill your empty cup. An empty cup can make you walk with your head down. You forget to smile. You forget you even knew how to laugh. However, you remember the 23rd psalm and those promising words coming from your parched lips cracked lips, it brings a lift to your heart and sending praise and glory to God. Accepting our weakness and pardoning our sins, blessing shower down from heaven and puts a wiggle in our walk. You start sentences with YAY, though I walk through the shadow of death, I fear no evil. You begin from the resurrection instead of from the crucifixion.

What is the difference between an empty cup and a full one? The difference is in the risk of emptying it. Overflow energy comes after we spill, not before. Instead we hear the waterfall in the background, the replenishing of abundance released. Abundance that is hoarded gets tiny and soon it's gone. Spilled, the abundance overflows flow. Our cups will overflow if we empty them.

There aren't many people who lived as full and unpredictable a life as David. A shepherd who became a giant killer. A warrior who became a fugitive. A king who became the ancestor of the King of Kings and promised messiah, Jesus Christ. Sounds like a voiceover for a movie trailer doesn't it? But wait, there's more. In addition to being a shepherd, warrior, and king, David was also an incredible poet and songwriter. You wouldn't expect to see shepherd-warrior-poet-king at the top of most resumes, but that was David, referred to in Scripture as “a man after God's own heart.” (1 Samuel 13:14)

Through his many songs, which today we call the Psalm, the warrior poet (I like the sound of that) was as eloquent and honest as they come. When his life was threatened and he was on the run from Saul, he turned his pain into poetry, crying out to God in his despair. When he was overwhelmed by the goodness of God, he put pen to paper and poured out his heart in praise.

David worshipped, he complained, he asked God for answers in times of doubt. And through it all, he was met with the never-ending love of a personal and purposeful God, who was with him every step of the way. Many of David's psalms carry a tone of anguish, and he definitely went through his fair share of tough times to warrant that kind of emotion. Psalm 23, however, has a completely different message.

To this day, it is one of the most uplifting and inspirational songs ever written and definitely David's most famous. With the 23rd Psalm, David praised the goodness and faithfulness of God using perhaps the most iconic metaphor for God in all of Scripture: “The Lord is my shepherd.” (Psalm 23:1) Later in Psalm 23, David wrote that, with God, “my cup overflows.” (Psalm 23:5) God is good, God is faithful, God is generous, and God takes care of his sheep.

Turning to the “cup” metaphor, we, as sheep, become like guests invited into God's house (Psalm 23:6). There, the host makes sure that our cups are full and that we are well taken care of. Jesus said, “for even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45) However, more than just a cup that has some drink in it, the cup David described is a cup that “overflows.”

David had encountered God's favor firsthand and knew better than anyone that God is definitely not stingy when it comes to caring for his sheep. He provides for our needs and is generous in doing so. He doesn't hesitate to offer us his best, and there is no limit to how much God can give. He gives and gives in abundance, physically but also spiritually, and that is the point. The greatest gift God offers is the gift of his presence and the provision of his spirit, which he pours out generously upon those who seek him overflowing our cup. (Joel 2:28-29; Zechariah 12:10; Luke 11:9).

On the night before his crucifixion, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus cried out to God, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." (Matthew 26:39) Jesus knew the agony that awaited him at the cross, an agony he was willing to endure for the sake of his sheep. He had even warned his disciples that this would happen just hours before, during their last supper together. Here, a cup was used again, this time as Jesus related the Passover meal to his eventual sacrifice. "And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.'" (Matthew 26:27-28) As a fulfillment of prophecy, Jesus didn't just spill one drop of blood. The shepherd became the sacrificial lamb who was willing to give it all so that we, his sheep, might be saved – overflowing our cup.

Earlier in Matthew's gospel, the mother of James and John, two of Christ's disciples, came to Jesus and asked if her sons could be seated at his right and left in eternity. To this, Jesus asked, "are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" (Matthew 20:22). James and John quickly answered, "yes," most likely unaware of what Jesus meant. Jesus warned his disciples that they too would face persecution and hardship in life (James 1:2-4; 2 Timothy 3:12). This is a same promised message to us - **Jesus' 20 September 2020 weary, pandemic and politically overloaded, will life ever get better Lord, empty disciples.** With blessed assurance, Jesus reminds us all that, "these things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Not unlike the 23rd Psalm, the good shepherd promises to never abandon his sheep. "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me," David writes (Psalm 23:4) David concluded his most famous Psalm with the words, "surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Psalm 23:6) As someone who had encountered the fullness of God's favor and abundance of God's presence, David trusted that God's best was still to come. He had only scratched the surface of God's blessing and favor. Even in the midst of life's most crazy, trying moments, the shepherd was never far. Yes, the chaotic and troubling time we find ourselves in today, Jesus, the great shepherd is not far away. He always has a plan and that plan is good. Be encouraged Christ's followers because the Word of God is still true today.

A cup that overflows with God's goodness and generosity will naturally spill out into the world and affect those around us. As God is generous with us, he expects us to be generous in giving to others. "Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return." (Luke 6:38) And as our cups overflow with the goodness and faithfulness of God, so should our hearts overflow with praise as well—as the peace, hope, joy, and love of God that we share freely with others. This is a wealth far more valuable than any earthly treasure. And our God, our good shepherd, is happy to make wealthy his sheep with the outpouring of his spirit, love, and favor. "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

I may not sip hot coffee from a saucer, but I can relate to a cup that has overflowed. Yes, I have known disappointment, heartache, and suffering. I am intimately familiar with the pain of loss. Yet I cannot help but be humbled by the grace and mercy of the God who has blessed me beyond measure. A cup that overflows with God's goodness and generosity will naturally spill out into the world and affect those around us, or at least it should. And as our cups overflow with the goodness and faithfulness of God, so should our hearts overflow with praise as well—as the peace, hope, joy, and love of God that we share freely with others.

This is a wealth far more valuable than any earthly treasure. And our God, our good shepherd, is happy to make wealthy his sheep with the outpouring of his spirit, love, and favor. Psalm 23 reminds me that “my cup overflows and drinking from the saucer, is not ill-mannered, but rather, give praise to God as it reminds us that the blessings of life can be simple and, more often than not, right there in front of you. And should you get the urge to sip and slurp from your saucer, be grateful that your cup is one that has overflowed. Sipping and Slurping from the overflowed blessing of my running over cup! Amen.