

Monday 2nd November Andrew Baddeley The Lord is my Shepherd

Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Monday's devotional, Monday the second of November. This week is obviously a new week and for all of us, we've just had the news over the weekend of this new lockdown that is pending on us this Thursday and obviously, this strikes up so many different emotions, and feelings and thoughts. And it's very easy to go into a very dark place, isn't it and think, oh gosh, just another month of being locked down and kept inside and all the implications that lockdown brings, and you can feel it in the atmosphere as well. Can you feel this feeling of just, oh, gosh, we've got this happening over us at this time in this nation and is there ever going to be an end and all these thoughts and emotions that just come out at this time. But as I was just looking to the Lord and just asking the Lord, 'Lord, what are you saying to us at this time, Lord, what, how are you leading us? What are you saying to us as a people?' I feel I have just a few thoughts I want to share with you this morning.

Firstly, Isaiah 60 has been a scripture that we've been meditating on and preaching on and proclaiming for years and years and years and I believe more than ever, that we are coming into this time of the fulfilment of Isaiah 60 in much more of a greater level. Just a quick reminder: 'arise and shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you'. And it's for us today, let the Lord rise upon us in the middle of the darkness and everything that is surrounding us in this world, arise and shine people of God, arise and shine, let the Holy Spirit arise upon us today, for the glory of the Lord would rise upon you in a new way, just allow Him just to fill you with His glory in this time, and I believe He's doing it. You know, as the darkness grows darker, the light will grow lighter. And Jesus says you are the light of the world. That's a fact, that is who we are. If we're born again today, if we've given our lives to Jesus, then we have the light of Christ in our hearts. 'See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the people', you know, it is quite obvious isn't it, you just have to read the news. And we feel it in the spirit, that there is a darkness, there is a covering over this earth at this moment and God's using this time for His glory, I believe. And we're obviously going to be welcoming His revival that I believe is going to come to this earth imminently in this time, and then he says, 'but the Lord rises upon you, and His glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn'. Such a beautiful scripture and I love reading that and it so charges my spirit and I read that and I think, 'Come on, Lord, let the light of your Holy Spirit rise on your people in this day and this hour for Your glory'. And even as you're listening this morning, wherever you're listening, if it's later today, just let the Holy Spirit infuse you today with His power. Let the Holy Spirit come, you know, I believe He's wanting to pour out His presence more than ever in His people. Whenever I gather to pray with His people, whenever I look to Him, I just feel the power of the presence of God just rising up in these days. So just allow Him to come and fill us.

I just want to quickly go through Psalm 23 this morning. This is going to be a bit of a whistle stop tour because there's so much in Psalm 23. Just as a bit of a... this is the well known psalm that most people, whether they're a Christian or not, can recite and it's very often spoken in many contexts.

Psalm 23, and there is so much in here, there is so much that David wrote this psalm as a king, but he wrote it when his memories of being a shepherd boy, to be a shepherd boy, is you know, he was the youngest son, so to be a shepherd was basically the rubbish job. No one wanted to do it. It was the lowliest point. However, David uses it as an analogy of our Jesus, of our Lord; that He is our shepherd. And verse one, as we know very well: 'The Lord is my shepherd'. Let's just stop right there. Let's just stop and think, The Lord, the Lord is my shepherd. That is a decision in itself, isn't it? We are deciding on the start of this week, on Monday morning we're saying 'no, The Lord is my shepherd'. He is your shepherd. He is my shepherd. There is a declaration that we are declaring out into the atmosphere, into the world and saying no, The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He is our everything, He is our all in all; the Lord is my shepherd. And I was rereading this again over the weekend and just reminding myself and I just kept saying, 'The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd'.

And He is your Shepherd today to speak it out. You know, if you're feeling pretty depressed this morning, or if you're feeling joyful, just speak it out 'The Lord is my shepherd' it's a decision, it's an everyday reminder, isn't it? This is who He is. The Lord is my shepherd, that I shall not be one in want. Jesus said in John chapter 10, which you'll know very well. He says, in two places actually, in verse 11, He says, 'I am the good shepherd'. And it's interesting that Jesus uses this analogy of Him being the shepherd, for the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. And then He goes and says the same thing in verse 14, 'I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me, just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep'. And Jesus is using this analogy saying that I am the shepherd, I am your Shepherd this morning. And my sheep know My voice, they know who I am. They know that I am their shepherd who guides them and leads them. In verse two: 'He makes me lie down in green pastures'. He's got good pastures for us today.

Isn't that a good thing to start the week, He has got , good pastures for us to rest in, to enjoy, to know that place of rest. 'He leads me beside quiet waters, He refreshes my soul'. If waters feel turbulent today, let the Lord lead you beside quiet waters. 'He guides me along paths of righteousness, for his name's sake'. And I'm just going to read from the passion translation, these last couple of verses, because it's so poetic, and brings it out in such a beautiful way. And he says, the writer says 'He offers a resting place for me in His luxurious love'. Isn't that beautiful? That He gives us this place of rest every day that we can, as we look to Him, our Shepherd King, we can rest in this place of His luxurious love. You can just feel it can't you, like a soft pillow, you can just let yourself go and let yourself rest in His luxurious love. 'His tracks take me to an oasis of peace, the quiet brook of bliss'. Wow, isn't that amazing? That place of peace that He leads us in.

'That's where He restores and revives my life. He opens before me pathways to God's pleasure, and leads me along His footsteps of righteousness, so that I can bring honour to His name'. It's interesting, isn't it that actually He restores and revives my life. But that reviving and that restoring comes from that place of resting in Him, of actually saying, 'God, I give up my striving, I give up my trying to make things happen. And Lord, I just say this morning even, I just choose to put myself at rest in you. I choose to put myself under my shepherd this morning, and rest in his oasis of peace'. And as you do that, He says that He will restore your soul. He will revive your life. He will lead you in God's pleasure, in His pathway for you this morning. And isn't that a beautiful promise that He has for us today? And we can just stop right there can't we and just sit in and enjoy His pleasures this morning. I don't know about you, but I'm just feeling His presence just saying 'come on'. Just let him lead you, He's dying to lead you into quiet waters. He's dying to lead you to that place of rest, to that place of green pasture. That is your inheritance, brothers and sisters this morning. As we start this week, and the news is full of turmoil, the news is full of all this stuff that is bombarding us; lockdown maybe more than a month and all the negativity that comes on you. But 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want'. Let him lead you beside quiet waters.

And then rushing forward again. He says 'even though I walk', in verse four, 'through the darkest Valley'. Now I like the classic Amplified Version, I was reading that and often read that one actually because maybe it's because when I started reading the Bible, that's what I was reading from, it's what I remember. 'But even though I walk through the shadow of death' is the other translation, which I think actually is probably easier to understand: 'I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me'. Now I just want to say that as you pass through, you're not passing through death, you're passing through the shadow of death, or the darkest Valley. Now, Jesus we know, has conquered sin and death, He has paid the price on the cross, that actually a shadow cannot hurt you. You can walk through a shadow, we don't need to be afraid of shadows, we need not be fearful of any shadows. As we pass through darkness there may be around us outside, that the Lord has conquered sin and death, that He has overcome the powers of darkness of this dark world.

So as we rest in Him this morning, we know that He has conquered this sin and death. Spurgeon brings this, I thought this was a really nice quote, he said, 'the shadow of a dog cannot bite, the shadow of a sword cannot kill, the shadow of death cannot destroy us'. So as we pass through the shadow of death, it cannot destroy us this morning, because He has conquered sin and death, we have Him as our Shepherd, leading us through this time, he says that your rod and your staff will comfort me. Now obviously, these are

implements used as a shepherd, the rod is to protect and the staff is to guide. So he's got His protection and His guidance guiding us through this walk.

And then, for the last few minutes, gosh, I've only got two minutes, that he says that You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. He prepares a table before you in the presence of your enemies. So just think of this table that He has prepared, I always like to think of it as a practical table. But just think of it that Jesus is before us today. He's before you and on this table is His goodness, on this table are good things, are His blessings and all the things that He wants to pour out over you this morning. You can feast on Jesus this morning, you can feast at the table because He's taking us up to a higher level now. He's saying, okay, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He has taken us through this journey, but in the middle of this journey, He has got this table, that we can feast on Jesus.

And you know, what I just want to leave you with this morning and what I wanted to just say is that, that whatever stuff gets thrown at us as believers that *He* has prepared a table for *you* In the middle of this. Let's fix our eyes on Jesus this morning, who is the author and perfecter of our faith. Let's focus on Him who is our Redeemer. Let's focus on Him who is our Saviour. Let's focus on Him who is our shepherd. He is the amazing God, He is the image of the invisible God. He is the firstborn amongst all creation. He is the one who has conquered sin and death. He is asking us, He's inviting you and me to sit at His table this morning, and to feast on Him, to enjoy the presence of God. To feast on all the things that He wants to bless you with this morning and I don't want to be on a fast in this day. I don't want to sit at this table and say no, Lord, I don't want any food. I'm having a fast. No, He's saying there's a banqueting table in front of you to feast on, to feast on our Lord, to focus on Him to feast on every bit of blessing that He wants to pour out over you this morning. So brothers and sisters, there's so much we can do. I can preach all day on this, but let the blessing of God...feast on His pleasures this morning, feast on Him. It's like beholding His glory, isn't it? We're talking about His glory. As we feast on Him we behold His glory. And as we know it says in Corinthians as we look to Him, we are transformed. It's like we're looking to Him in a mirror. We reflect His very glory. So as you feast on Him, as you look to Him, as you feast on His delights and His character, and who He is this morning, just let yourself be transformed by the glory of God, let yourself be transformed into a new creation this morning, into the bright shining ones. He's called us to be those vessels of glory that we talked about in Isaiah 60, that we can be those glory carriers in this day. That okay, yes, we have gotten the shadow of death, we've got the enemies around us of death and destruction and negativity, but we have the Spirit of God, we've got Jesus, who is our guide and our Shepherd leading us through this time, who is the one who restores our soul.

So God bless you this morning. There's so much more in here that He anoints our head with oil, so our cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever'. Amen, God bless you! Let me pray. 'Father, we just pray today that your presence would so go with us that we would be able to feast at your table this morning. No matter what life throws at us, no matter what stuff that we have to face this morning. I pray that your Holy Spirit will be our strength this morning; that we would feast and delight ourselves in you today in the name of Jesus. And I pray that you would bring rest to all our souls in the middle of this time. So God bless you. Be filled with the presence of God and be filled with the beauty of Jesus, in the name of Jesus.

Have a great week, and devotions again tomorrow morning. Amen.