

He restores my soul

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Prof J.Douglas Macmillan

[0 : 00] Now let us turn this evening to the Old Testament scriptures and to the book of Psalms. And to Psalm 23, the 23rd Psalm.

And to the opening words of the third verse there. These words, He restoreth my soul.

It always was we have the first indication in this lovely psalm that the Christian believer has a strange and sad perversity in his or her heart.

The first indication that one who has been redeemed and saved by the Lord and brought into his flock by the great shepherd of God's sheep.

The very first indication that such a one like a sheep can go astray. Not only can go astray, but is always up to go astray.

[1 : 28] It's strange, isn't it? That one who has been washed and cleansed in the blood of Christ, one who has known peace of heart and quiet of conscience, one who has known all the riches of God's grace, that such a one should ever stray away from the shepherd who loved him and gave himself for him.

To the third verse in this psalm, everything is very beautiful. What a lovely relationship is set before us.

In these words we know so well, and perhaps there's very familiarity, cloud, the beauty of them. The Lord is my shepherd. My friend, you are blessed tonight if you can say these words in reality.

And you don't even begin to know how blessed you are. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me to lie down.

It's one thing you can tell about a sheep that's lying down. It's a happy, contented sheep. And it lies down in green grass.

[2 : 54] And I think I've said from the book before, if you see a sheep lying in green grass, you can be sure of one thing about it. It's not hungry. Only a sheep that has been absolutely satisfied will lie down in green grass.

Indeed, it may be beside the still waters. What a calm picture of the Christian disciple following the Lord Jesus.

And then comes this, here he stilleth my soul. And as I say, it's the first indication that the soul needs any restoration. And isn't it beautiful that the Lord puts it in this way?

Not in the way of a rebuke. But in the way of thankfulness. From the sheep that has gone astray.

From the soul that has backslidden and wandered away from God. Ah, this cause of thankfulness. He restores my soul.

[4 : 00] The Lord Jesus is not only the great shepherd of the sheep. He is not only careful of the whole flock.

For he is careful of every single individual sheep in the flock. And part of his duty as shepherd is to restore.

To be a retriever. To bring back the sheep that wander away. And you know, the very fact that it is here tells us that every single sheep in the flock of Christ is up to stray and wander.

Yes, perhaps some sheep are up, more up than others to wander away. But it's in the very nature of a sheep to wander.

So our subject this evening is the Lord Jesus Christ. The shepherd of the sheep. As the restorer.

[5 : 06] The bringer again. Of his sheep. The restorer of the Christian believer. My friend, if it wasn't for the Savior exercising this office toward every single believer.

Not one of them. Would be safe. Not one of them would remain within the flock. As we look at the words on the earth.

The great. And the comforting truth taught us in them. I want to do basically just two things. I want us to look at. The necessity. In the Christian life.

The necessity. For restoration. Then I want us. We want from the necessity of restoration. To look at the reality. Of restoration.

Christ. Will not allow. One of these sheep. Not even one of the littlest. Of them. To perish.

[6 : 14] They shall never perish. He said. Neither shall any man. Pluck them out of my hand. Yes. Yes. They'll wander. And yes.

There is an absolute necessity. That he come and restore them again. And again. And again. But that's his task.

And he is so magnificent at it. That none of them shall ever wander away. Without return. So. Let's take these two thoughts.

The necessity. For restoration in the Christian life. And the reality. Of restoration. In the Christian life. Now. If there is one consideration.

More. Than another. In the spiritually minded believer. It is. Surely this. That after all.

[7 : 10] God has done for him. After all. The displays. Of God's grace. After all.

The tenderness. Of God's dealing. After the patience. With which he has. Ruled in one hour. That there should still exist.

In the believing heart. A principle. A principle. Whose leading tendency is.

To. Secret. Unperpetual. And constant. Departures. From God. Perhaps we didn't believe that.

When we were first converted. But if we were converted. We weren't very long. On the way. Until we found out.

[8 : 12] That that was so. Let me say it again. Surely there is nothing. That should so amaze us. And so. Make us so watchful.

And prayerful. As this. That in our lives. As redeemed. By Christ. There is a principle. At one. Whose leading tendency.

Is to secret. And perpetual. And. Consistent. Departure. From the living God.

And that's a very solemn fact. And it is something that. Every Christian believer. Should come to grips with. You know it. From your own experience. Already my friend.

I know it from mine. And we find this principle. Elaborated for us. In innumerable ways. In God's word. It.

[9 : 10] Need not surprise us. That from the moment. We begin. To follow the Lord Jesus Christ. From the moment. We know that we're safe.

In his flock. Yes. And from the moment. We rejoice. In his salvation. That there is. Something at work. In us. That will make us. Turn away.

Even from such a savior. As Jesus is. The Bible teaches us. That the divine life.

In the soul. Has its residence. And a heart. Only partially. Renewed. Degeneration.

Works in all the faculties. Of the soul. So that the whole man. Is renewed. And yet.

[10 : 08] Although he's. As far as the extent. Goes. Although he's renewed. In all his faculties. The Christian believer. Is not renewed. In totality.

In degree only. And there is still. In us. Principle of sin. And iniquity. Paul calls it.

In Romans 7. In dwelling sin. And when you read Romans 7. And I believe that Romans 7. Gives us.

Not the picture of a non-converted. Strife with sin. But the picture. Of a regenerate soul. That knows the reality.

Of indwelling corruption. And indwelling sin. Regeneration doesn't make us. Perfect in sanctification. It makes us.

[11 : 07] Perfect in justification. We are the children of God. And we are justified. From all our sins. The moment we believe in Jesus. Our state is put right.

And then God begins. To conform us. To that state. He has brought us into his family. And made us children of God.

And then he begins to mold us. And make us children. In heart and in nature. But it is a lifelong process. And it is a process.

Which has to go on. In face of the fact. That there is still. What Professor John Murray. Used to call. The end tale. Of sin dwelling.

In the believer. Paul. You'll remember. From our studies in Galatians. Last winter. Paul. You'll remember. Spoke of the life.

[12 : 06] That he lived as a Christian believer. Like this. He says. It is the life. Which I now live. In the flesh. Galatians 2.20 The life.

Which I now live. In the flesh. You would not say. I live in the faith. By the faith. Of the Son of God. Yes. But it was a life. And he was careful to say that. That he lived in the realm.

Of the flesh. And we remember too. How Paul uses that title. Flesh. It is. That which is. The very antithesis.

Of God. And of holiness. Paul. Uses it. An antithesis. To the idea. Of life. In the spirit. So.

Although the Christian. Is regenerated. And renewed. In all his faculties. Yet. Never holy so. And although he is. Brought into. Discipleship.

[13 : 03] And following Jesus. And although he knows. The blessings. Of the covenant of grace. That we were singing of. In Psalm 89. Yet. There is in him.

An evil heart. Of unbelief. There is in him. That which. Continually. Presses him. To depart.

From the very. Socialist life. There is in him. A principle. Which always. Tends. Away from God.

So the first reason. For the necessity. Of restoration. In our lives. As Christian believers. Is this. The internal state.

Of our souls. Man and innocence. Didn't have. That. Natural.

[14 : 04] Tendency. Man and innocence. Loved his God. And loved fellowship. With God. It was. Sin.

Sin. Sin. Bringing about. The fall. And the corruption. Of nature. That made man. Like that. Our forebears. Here in Scotland.

When they were preaching. The word. Talked. Of the total. Depravity. Of human nature. My friend. They were dealing. With a terrible. Biblical truth. And the total.

Depravity. Of human nature. Has not changed. Now by using. The word. Total depravity. They didn't mean. That man. Was as. Had become. As bad. As he possibly.

Could become. But they meant. That. He had been. Affected. By sin. In every. Faculty. Of his nature. Will. Heart.

[15 : 00] Mind. All. Depraved. And. Brought. Under the. Power. And dominion. Of sin. And regeneration.

We must remember. When God comes. To quicken the soul. The soul is dead. In trespasses. And in sin. And only soul. Is brought alive. There is still.

Much in nature. Within the heart. And within the life. That belongs to. Total depravity. To sin. So much so.

That we can say. That there is in fact. Nothing. For you to think about this. My Christian friend. There is nothing. In us. By nature. Which is. Favorable.

To the grace of God. Everything in your mind. Or in your heart. That is. Favorable. To the work.

[15 : 59] Of the savior. In your soul. And for your soul. Is of the pure. Grace of God. Have you learned. Not dear my dear.

Have you learned. To say what. The apostle Paul. To quote him again. Said. I have learned. That in me. That is. In my flesh. Dwelleth.

No good thing. Nothing. In and of ourselves. To cooperate with.

Or to work along with. Or to push forward. The grace of God. The very opposite. Is the truth. The very opposite.

Everything in us. Our own natural reason. Until it's. Enlightened. And renewed. By the Holy Spirit. And even then.

[16 : 55] Not totally. Our own natural reason. Will work again. The faith. Which is of the. The Holy Spirit. Our own hearts.

Even when renewed. Will walk away. From the grace. That alone. Can hold them. And keep them. Everything.

In us. By nature. Is hostile. To the work. Of God in us. I want to pause there. We're talking still. About. The internal nature. That bespeaks.

The absolute necessity. Of the Lord. Doing a work. Of rest restoration. I want to speak. To the unconverted people. Here this evening. Now.

For a moment. My unconverted friend. If this is true. Of the Christian believer. If it is true. Of every single.

[17 : 51] Christian here. That in them. There is a heart. That. Holds. To a principle. Working against. Grace. And against God.

That in them. There is that. Which would depart. Even from the Savior. Who has washed them. And cleansed them. In the world of you. Everything in you.

Yes. Every single thing in you. Imperils you. Away from the grace. That alone can save you.

My unconverted friend. I would up to you tonight. To seek the one. I'm the only one. Who can help you. Because of the nature.

You've got. The Holy Spirit of God. The one of whom. We were speaking to. A couple of days. Evenly. When we were looking at me. Tender and yet.

[18 : 51] Very solemn words. Grieve not. The Holy Spirit of God. I know my unconverted friend. How often. You do grieve.

The Spirit who alone. Can quicken you. The Holy Spirit of God. And then when we go from the internal to the external. We see again. That this principle of departing from God.

Even in the soul that's alive. has. The Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit of God. To make it operate terribly effectively.

As there is nothing internal. Working for our good. Or to further us in the state of grace. So there is nothing external.

About the Christian. To help it forward. What kind of world. Is the Christian. Regenerated in.

[19 : 53] What kind of world. Does he have to live in. In a world. Which is at. Enmity. With God. That's the kind of world. That is.

The environment. In which. The newborn soul. Has to survive. And all of us know.

What danger. A little infant is in. If it's left alone. In a hostile environment. A little baby won't survive.

And the child of God. Is born into a. A hostile environment. A world.

That's at enmity. With God. Pause and think over that. My friend. Not only is the world hostile. But the prince. Of the power.

[20 : 52] Of this world. Is hostile. Satan. The devil. And his angels. And the devil. And his angels. We are told. Is always.

On the watch. To assault. God's children. To accuse them. Yes.

And to arrest. If he can. The work of God's. Grace in their heart. The devil. Said Peter. And oh no. Peter knew it.

Not just as a theological doctrine. In his mind. But he knew it. From his heart. And his bitter experience. Peter said. The devil. As a roaring lion.

Goeth about seeking. Whom he may devour. Now I do believe. That all of us today. Tend to take this.

[21 : 49] Far too lightly. We do not calculate. On the power. The malicious. Malignant.

Evil power. That is arrayed against. The children of God. God. But it's there. There is the world. There is Satan.

There is the flesh. The pride of life. Pardon us. Which is attracted to. A thousand. Temptations.

So. Internal. Internal. And external. External. Enemies. Of our souls.

And we are all. Grouped together. What a necessity. There is. For restoration. Let me for a moment.

[22 : 46] Just illustrate that. From the life of David. This morning. We were thinking about that. David. And how he had fallen. And yet. God's grace.

Making him penitent. God's grace. Bringing him again. This is the same David. Who. Who prayed to God. And said. Hold. Low me up.

And I shall be safe. What a lovely picture. Isn't that prayer? He is literally saying to God. Take me up. In your arms. And only when I am up.

In your arms. Will I really be safe? My friend. That is true for every believer. Not only for David. David said this too.

David prayed this prayer. This is the prayer. Of a man of God. And our studies in the life of David. Should teach us. Why he had to pray it. This is it. Keep back.

[23 : 48] Thy servant also. from all. From all. From all. Presumptuous sin. Imagine. A Christian.

Having to pray like that. Oh my Christian friends. You're discovering that you have to pray like that. Every day. Keep back. Also thy servant. From all.

Presumptuous sin. What is presumptuous sin? It is sin against light. And against love. And against knowledge. Against the light. That God has given us from heaven.

And David went on. To say. Keep me back. Keep. Back thy servant. From presumptuous sins.

Let them not have dominion over me. He was afraid. That sin would dominate. His life.

[24 : 46] My friend. And often sin does. Dominate us. Dominate us. So that at times. We look up. And we say. Surely. This can't be. The heart of a child of God.

Surely. This mind. Has never been enlightened. And renewed. Ah yes. Enough. In every one of us. In the most saintly. And the most godly of us.

Is a mind. Of the heart. The evil unbelief. Which would. Depart. From the living God. How we should cling.

Take Hebrews. The apostle. Writing to the Hebrews. Said this. Take heed brethren. Take heed brethren. Lest there be in any one of you.

An evil heart. Of unbelief. In departing. From the living God. The irrisome principle. Illustrated for us. The very words imply. That there is a constant tendency.

[25 : 47] In the believer. To wander away. Just like a sheep. Of all domestic animals.

The sheep is the one. That will go a slave. Isn't it lovely. That God. God himself. Should have named. Our savior.

Our fellow shepherd. Isn't it condescending. But isn't it true. That God has given us.

A great truth. In the very name. He has given us. When he has named us. As the sheep. Of our shepherd. You know. You know.

What God said. Of his people. In the old testament. Age. It's sound. Listen to it. My people. He said. Yes. My people. Not the ungodly. Not the heathen.

[26 : 46] Not those. Who had never known. Grace. And mercy. Not those. Who didn't know. What fellowship. With the living God. Was. But. My people. My people.

He said. Backslide. Oh. He said it far more strongly. Than that. He said. My people. Are bent. To backsliding. From me.

They're bent to it. They're inclined. Toward it. Inclined away. From the very source.

Of their life. And of their peace. And of their blessing. Isn't it sad. Isn't it solemn. Does it not. Urge us.

To cling to Christ. That root of sin in us all. The necessity. Of his restoring us.

[27 : 46] But my friend. He does. Let's come into. That wonderful truth. The reality. Of restoration. The reality. Of restoration. Of restoration. For the Christian believer.

He. Restores. My soul. My soul. If you didn't. If he didn't do that. You wouldn't have followed him.

For one hour. It's because. He restores. Your soul. That you've gone on. Through the years.

Seeking his name. Fighting against. Sin. And coldness. And hardness. And unbelief. It's because. He restores. Your soul. That you know.

Moments. Of peace. And of reality. With God. And it's because. He restores. Your soul. That you have a real hope. For the future.

[28 : 45] Because. He is a restorer. Of sinners. To his favor. And his love. And his blessing. It's because of that.

That you know. That one day. Will be with him in heaven. God will not. Let his people go.

I have loved this people. He said to Pharaoh. I have loved them. And I have commanded them. And I will not.

Let them go. Having this confidence. Said the apostle Paul. To the Philippians. Having this confidence.

He was persuaded. It was a confidence. That he had attained to. Through his own experience. And through the teaching. Of the Holy Ghost. Having this confidence. That where God.

[29 : 41] Has begun. A good one. He will perform it. Until the day of Jesus Christ. He will. And then. And then. Perhaps you think of yourself still. As unconverted. Perhaps you've only got longings.

And sighings in your soul. Oh. These very longings. And sighings. Perhaps they're a sign. That a good work has started. And I want you to take courage tonight.

To look up to the God of all grace. If he started a good. A saving. A redeeming work in your soul. He'll never stop it.

And my Christian. Brother and my Christian sister. Take all your fears. And bring them to this assurance. Given us by the Holy Spirit.

Well. He has begun. A good work. He will perform it. And I will go as far as this. He'll perform it. Despite.

[30 : 39] That principle. Which is what is so strongly in us. Without departing from God. This shepherd cares for his sheep. This shepherd loves his sheep.

That's the very first point. I would like to make. This shepherd restores. Because. This shepherd loves. I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd came. To give his life. For the sheep. And do you think he's going to allow one sheep? One sheep for whom he tasted death.

To be lost. No. He's a tender shepherd. And his love is manifested. I think supremely in this. But it's always.

Our shepherd. The Lord Jesus. Who takes the first step after us. When we wander away. When we wander away. When we wander away. There's one thing. Sure about a wandering sheep.

[31 : 45] It will walk away. But it will never walk back. A shepherd. A shepherd. A shepherd. When he misses a sheep.

Has to go and look for him. And there is only one thing. That will keep a shepherd. Looking for our lost sheep. And I have looked for our lost sheep.

Literally for weeks. Spent days. Not just days. But weeks. Scouring the hill. For our lost sheep. They would wander away.

Off our hill. Altogether. In a mammalian sheep. You get a phone call sometimes. From somebody. Ten miles away. Saying there's a sheep. In our funk today. We've done a gathering.

And we've got a sheep. In our funk. And it's got your ear mark. On it. On it. And remember my father saying. Good job. We've got these sheep marked. Or we would have very few of them left.

[32 : 40] Ah. This good shepherd is a mark on his sheep too. And we put that mark on. In love. When a woman is away.

When it's even in a mammalian sheep. He'll go after it. Until he finds it. Never off his mind.

Imagine that. My friend. You feel your heart's cold. And hard tonight. You feel how box-lidden. You are in your Christian life. Let me say this to you.

Since the moment. You took the first step away. Out of fellowship with the Lord Jesus. You've been more heavily on his heart. And in his mind. Than ever you were before.

What did he say himself? This is what he said. What man of you having. A hundred sheep. If you lose one of them.

[33 : 46] He would say this. Oh well. I've still got ninety-nine. And I'll watch them. Let no more of them go away. No. That's not what Jesus said. He said. Which man of you having. A hundred sheep.

If you lose one. Will not leave. The ninety-nine in the wilderness. And go off. Seek not what is lost. And he will seek it.

Until he find it. And then. He says something that. I think is very lovely. He said then. He. When he findeth his sheep.

He lays it on his shoulder. Rejoicing. Here's the picture of a sheep. That has wandered away. Until it has no strength. To return.

This is one of the sad things. About our declensions. Our declines in grace. And our wanderings away from Jesus. We wander. Until we've got no strength.

[34 : 48] To return. And only the shepherd coming for us. And laying us on his shoulder. Will ever carry us back.

To the fold of God. I've done it. I have carried. A sheep on my shoulders. For four or five miles.

Because there was no other way. Of restoring to the flock. Under thy human shepherd.

Will it do not. For thou have known many shepherds who have done it. How much more would a great shepherd. Of God she.

Carries. He. He. He. He. Carries. All the way back. To the center of his love. And his blessing. He.

[35 : 46] He. Restoreth my soul. Love is the first element. And then there's power. My friend.

What does a wandering spiritual sheep need. Needs omnipotent power. Needs one who is mighty. Do you know the psalm that says.

Their redeemer is mighty. Not every shepherd. They can carry a sheep back. Four to five or ten miles. This shepherd comes.

This shepherd said. All power. Is given unto me in heaven and in earth. This shepherd says that. Every other power and force in the universe.

Is under his control. God has set him. Above principalities and powers. He has given the name that is exalted. Above every name.

[36 : 47] He said himself. In his high priestly prayer to God. He said this before he went to the cross. As thou hast given him power.

Over all flesh. Yes. Over all flesh. Why? Had God given him power over all flesh. He tells us.

As thou hast given him power over all flesh. That he might give eternal life. Unto as many as thou hast given him.

That's why he has all power. And when he gives life. My friend is not going to allow that life. To be destroyed. He will take it back. Psalm 89. Let me read you.

Again. Some of the verses we read there. In the 89th Psalm. Verse 30. Onward. If his children forsake my law.

[37 : 50] And which one of them does not. And walk not in my judgment. If they break my statutes. And keep not my commandments. Then. Will I visit the transgression with the rod. And the iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless. Listen to this my friend.

Yes. This is the rod. And the stripes. And that's frightening. Makes our hearts tremble. But listen to this. Nevertheless. My loving kindness.

And you can't really translate that. Or it's from the original. Loving kindness is only an attempt at it. My tender. Merciful. Gracious.

Kind love. My loving kindness. Will I not utterly take from him. Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break.

[38 : 46] Nor alter the thing that has gone out of my lips. I have sworn and I will perform it. I have said. None of these little ones shall perish.

Nor shall they. Power. Wisdom. What is the gulf. That exists between the shepherd and his sheep in the normal life.

It is just the gulf that there is between. Wisdom and ignorance. Self conscious intelligence. And the animal mind.

This is why a shepherd needs a sheep. Why a shepherd of all animals will not survive. Why a sheep of all animals will not survive without a shepherd. My friend. You would not survive.

Very long. From the hour of your conversion. If the Savior was not a shepherd. And he shepherds you all the way until you get home. And he does it wisely.

[40 : 02] This morning we were thinking of how he can use affliction. To bring us back into humility. From penitence.

Before him. And that leads me to speak of this finally. Gentleness. Jesus. Comes to shepherd us.

With great tenderness. David the psalmist. Quote him again. He knew that. He said. Thy gentleness. Hath made me great. His gentleness.

He deals with us. Never deals with us after our sin. Never rewards us according to our iniquity. He comes.

Not with the voice of accusation. But with the tender voice of invitation. And he says to us when we must say. Come. All ye that live are under heavy laden.

[41 : 12] And I will give you less. And Jesus speaks that. To his own people he speaks. And if there's any soul that needs rest.

It's a soul. That has wandered. Far from God. Which one of us tonight. Has not wandered.

I pray. In his works he restored us my soul. And apply them. Joyfully. And believingly to your own heart.

And apply them to somebody else. Don't say yes. They're fine for the minister. Or they're fine for the elders. Or they're very fitting for somebody else. Surely you're afraid.

For you sold for my soul. It goes on wonderful truth. You restored my soul. Which one of us.

- [42 : 15] Does not have to say with the hymn writer. Tonight. Have to say with him. Where is the blessedness I knew. When first I saw the Lord.
- Where is the soul refreshing view. Of Jesus and his work. Return. Oh. All he does return.
- Sweet messenger of rest. I hate the sin. But may the Lord. Undraw thee from my bed. And the wonder is.
- That when we feel a lot. And play it in reality. We do it because. He is. The story. Our soul. And of grace.
- O Lord. O God. We thank you tonight. For the tenderness of the grace. Which works in us.
- [43 : 16] For the grace that takes us back into the fold. And that pardons us. And forgives us. And cleanses us. For the grace that breathes again.
- Into the warmth. With the warmth of life. Into our cold hearts. For the grace that quickens our minds. To go back to read thy word.
- For the grace that brings us. Brokenly to the feet of the Lord Jesus. For the grace that makes us see our sin. And that leaves us uncomfortable in it.
- For the grace that tapers us again. For the grace that will not leave us. For all this. O Lord our God. We give thee thanks. And bless thee that thou art.
- A powerful and gracious enema. Bless each one of us. And restore our souls. And be a good shepherd to all of us.
- [44 : 14] Grant it we pray thee. To our salvation. And thy glory in it. Amen.