

SERIES: LIVING THE GOOD LIFE  
PART 4: HOW GOD RESTORES MY SOUL

Welcome home to your CVCHURCH FAMILY. We are a multi-cultural and intergenerational local church family of faith. If you're a guest with us today, we welcome you home, and we love you and treat you as a part of our family.

We are in part four of our 10 week series as we are going verse by verse through Psalm 23. Please read out loud with me vv. 1-3. Let's begin, "**The Lord is my Shepherd; I have all that I need. <sup>2</sup>He lets me rest in green meadows; He leads me beside peaceful streams. <sup>3</sup>He restores (renews) my soul (strength.)**" We just read some of the most powerful promises you will ever read about God's heart and character towards you. God the Father and Jesus are your Shepherd, and He says, "I want to give you rest, and I want to give you refreshment, and I want to restore your life. This morning (afternoon) I want to discuss with you how your Savior, Jesus Christ, wants to give you rest, refreshment and restoration to the broken places in your life.

God says He wants to restore your soul. What does that mean? First, what's your soul? My soul, your **soul, is the part of you that thinks, chooses and feels. Your soul is your mind, will and your emotions.** Your mind, emotions and will really define who you are. Would you agree with me that it is very easy to get your mind, will and emotions damaged? Can your mind be damaged? Yes, it can by what you feed your brain—whether it's food, drugs, supplements and thoughts. You don't always think straight, do you? And, neither do I. How about your emotions? Can your emotions be damaged? Yes. Your emotions can get raw. You can get depleted emotionally. You can be so numb that you don't feel anything, and you can be way over-emotional. Yes, our minds are broken. Our emotions are broken. Actually, your will can be broken. God says to us today through Psalm 23:3 that, "I want to personally restore your soul. I want to restore how you think so that you can think My thoughts and experience My peace. I want to restore your soul so that you can choose My best for you every second of every day. I want to restore you to wholeness. I want to restore your mind, will

and emotions to health.” This is one of the things that the Good Shepherd does for the sheep. Sometimes I need to think straighter than what I am. I need to feel more correctly, because my emotions aren’t always right. Sometimes my emotions lie to me. Sometimes I need my will healed, because I can have a tendency to connect with the wrong thoughts, wrong things and wrong people. Jesus says today, “I want to restore all the areas in your life that are broken, tweaked and damaged.”

I want us to ask three questions this morning (afternoon). First, what actually damages my soul? We’ll look at that. I can’t get my soul restored unless I know what’s causing the problem. Then we will look at what Jesus does to restore my soul. How does Jesus restore healthy thinking, healthy feeling and healthy decision making? Then we’ll look at, briefly, how do I make the kind of decisions that allows Jesus, my Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd to restore my soul? In other words, what’s my response to be to what God wants to do in my life?

## **I. What are those things that damage my soul?**

### **A. Unaddressed grudges**

When you become resentful, when you get bitter, when you start thinking about retaliation or revenge against someone’s who hurt you, it is like a cancerous toxin, and it will damage your soul. The fact is, friends, life is not fair and just. You will get hurt in life. Why? Because this is not heaven. This is earth. We’re all broken people. We’re all imperfect. Sometimes we hurt each other intentionally. Sometimes we hurt each other unintentionally. When this happens we begin to build up grudges. But the most important truth about this subject is not that you’re going to get hurt, but it is critically important that you know that and that you own that. What’s most important is what do you do with the hurt you sustain? How you respond to getting hurt in life is far more important than the hurt you have experienced. Because you can choose to take your hurt and cause it to make you better or bitter. When God says I want to restore your soul, He is saying “I want to take all of the bitter things in your life and turn them into better things.”

When someone hurts you, that puts them beneath you morally. But when you try to get even, it just puts you on the same level. You're no better than they are.

What do you do when you get hurt? Do you resent, retaliate, or seek revenge? Here is the problem with these strategies. Job 5:2 says, **“Surely resentment destroys the fool, and jealousy kills the simple.”** Job 18:4 says, **“You're only hurting yourself with your anger.”** When you hold onto a grudge, you're not really hurting the other person; you're only hurting yourself. The Bible says that there is a judgment day, and that God is not just a loving God, but He's a just God. If God was not a just God, people like Hitler, Pol Pot and Stalin could get away with everything they did. For everyone who has accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and has accepted God's grace, favor and salvation that Christ paid for your sins, there will be no judgment, because Jesus took your judgment. There will be an evaluation on our thoughts, actions and words, but our salvation is secure. We can stand up for justice, and the Bible tells us to do so, but to exact revenge, we're told not to do so. Romans 12:17-19 says, **“Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. <sup>18</sup>Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup>Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, ‘I will take revenge; I will pay them back,’ says the Lord.”** Martin Luther King once said, **“Bitterness is blindness.”** I resonate with that truth because when I get bitter against someone over here, I become blind to a whole lot of other things. Your soul will not be restored until you learn to forgive and let it go. You've got to release those who have wronged you.

## **B. Unconfessed guilt**

Grudges and guilt are two of the biggest enemies of your soul. Grudges have to do with what people have done to you, and guilt is what you've done to other people. We all have been involved in both of these wrongs. Unconfessed guilt—nothing damages your life more and nothing will rob your happiness quicker than to go around carrying a load of guilt. God does not want you to live a life where you feel guilty, ashamed and humiliated for being who you are. Psalm 32:3-4 says, **“When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and**

**I groaned all day long. <sup>4</sup>Day and night Your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.**” Please hear me, friend. Unconfessed sin leads to unconfessed guilt. Here are some of the negative impacts of undealt with guilt:

**1) Denial.** People who experience lots of guilt often times make poor decisions on an ongoing basis. We become defensive and insecure because we don’t admit our faults and deal with them. Denial is a problem. **2) Minimization.** This is where we act as if it is no big deal what happened to us, or what I did wasn’t a big deal. If what you did or said to someone keeps coming back to you, that is the Holy Spirit saying it is doing damage to you and to the relationship. Deal with it. **3) Rationalization.** This is where we tell ourselves rational lies. You try to convince yourself in your head what you know in your heart is wrong. **4) Compromise.** This is where we lower our standards, and we don’t do what we know is the right thing to do. **5) Blame.** When we feel guilty, often times we simply blame other people for how we feel, think and act.

### **C. Unprocessed grief**

There is no growth in life without change. There is no change in life without loss, because you must give up something old to receive something new. There’s no loss without pain, and there’s no pain without grief. It is important to learn to grieve well. Grief is a good thing, but guilt and unconfessed guilt does damage to your soul. In Psalm 31:9-10 David writes, **“Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am in distress. Tears blur my eyes. My body and soul are withering away. <sup>10</sup>I am dying from grief; my years are shortened by sadness. Sin has drained my strength; I am wasting away from within.”** If grudges don’t get you, guilt will, and if guilt doesn’t get you, unprocessed grief will. All of us can have these things that eat away at our soul, the way we think, the way we feel and the decisions we make. Psalm 23 says that when you make Jesus your Shepherd you have all that you need to succeed in life. He will give you rest and refreshment. And, today, we’re looking at vs. 3 that says, Jesus, our Shepherd restores and renews my soul and strength. How does Jesus restore and renew our souls? I want to give you three ways He does.

## II. How Jesus restores my soul

### A. Jesus wants to turn my hurts into wholeness

When we're hurt by others. What I mean by that Jesus turns my hurts into holiness is that God says He is the only one in our universe that can consistently bring good out of bad for us. Jesus can bring good out of evil. God says, "I can turn the bad things in your life around. I can transform it." It is the goodness of God that allows this to happen. One of the most famous verses in the Bible on this topic is Romans 8:28. **"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them."** The Bible tells us God is the only one who can take everything in our lives and weave it together into an incredible tapestry that will bring Him glory and will work out for our benefit. God can take my own rebellion and mistakes, and those things that people do against me, and bring good out of them. God can take my own weaknesses and my damaged mind, will and heart, and He can turn my hurts into His wholeness in me, and that is good. Here are some ways God takes the bad in our lives and turns it into our good. He turns my hurts into His wholeness by taking my wounds and hurts and turns them into practical wisdom. You're a lot wiser after you gone through some harrowing experience. God turns our pain into gain. He uses correction to bring me to maturity. He uses offenses to remove my pretenses because the result is I'm more humble when I get criticized. He uses my bruises for good. When others want to bash me, God uses it to bless me. That is the kind of God He is. He's a good God all the time. The Lord is my Shepherd. He knows how to bring good out of bad.

### B. Jesus takes my sin on Himself

Jesus says, "I took the damage of your soul into my own soul, and I now have the power, ability and desire to transform your soul and to restore it and make it whole." In Isaiah 53:4-6, Isaiah, a prophet of God, prophesied specifically the price that the suffering Messiah would pay. **"Yet it was our weaknesses He carried; it was our sorrows (sicknesses) that weighed Him down. And we**

thought His troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for His own sins! <sup>5</sup>But He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. <sup>6</sup>All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on Him the sins of us all." This is the most basic fundamental truth of the Bible. This verse is horrifying, in one sense, because you can see that Jesus had to go to such a length because of the damage of our sin, rebellion and brokenness. The Bible is very honest with us. Jesus, our precious Shepherd, became the Lamb of God that was slain for our benefit. It was our weaknesses, brokenness and savages that Jesus carried on the cross. It was our sicknesses and diseases that weighed Him down. The nails and sword pierced His precious flesh because of our rebellion, and He was crushed and destroyed for our sins. If you think sin is not serious, you don't have to look any further than what Jesus Christ did on the cross for you. Jesus was beaten and whipped so we could be healed Spiritually, emotionally and relationally. This is the only way Jesus could restore our souls. His soul had to be destroyed, and then His loving Father raised Him from the dead and gave Him power over our sin, rebellion and all of the damage that sin has caused to this planet, all of creation and humanity. Oh how Great is our Savior's love for us. If you are here today, and you haven't surrendered your life to Jesus, I encourage you not to wait another second. Don't let your own arrogance, pride and hubris block you from allowing Jesus to restore, renew and reconcile you to your loving Father. Today is the day of Salvation.

### **C. Jesus feels my grief and heals my heart**

What is the reason Jesus can feel my grief? Because He understands grief from the inside out. He came to earth and became one of us, so He's experienced all of the loneliness, disappointment, despair, depression, isolation, and alienation and betrayal that people can experience. He knows rejection and abandonment from the inside out. That is the goodness of God, friends. The Lord is our—my—Shepherd. Isaiah 53:3 says, "**He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on Him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.**" Jesus not only

understands and can empathize with you, but because He is God, He doesn't just feel, but He can heal and restore your damaged soul. Psalm 147:3 says, "**He (God) heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.**" Loved friends, I don't know what has broken your heart. Some of you, your hearts are breaking right now. I'm so sorry. I'm glad you're here because this is the place for the healing of broken hearts. The fact of life is Jesus says, "I heal and I feel and I care about what you're going through. I will feed, lead and care for you as one of My sheep if you will entrust your life into My care." If you haven't done that yet I encourage you to do it today. What are you doing with your grief? Who have you lost that you really cared about? You might be saying to yourself, does any one love me? Does anyone care about me? Does anyone want me? Yes—Jesus does, and your CVCHURCH family does.

### III. How can I respond?

#### A. Trust the Good Shepherd to forgive my sins

The first step is to believe and receive the fact that Jesus has forgiven you of your sin. Jesus wants to remove the guilt, shame, humiliation, isolation, and alienation that come from living your life in separation and rebellion against God. Romans 3:23-24 says this, "**For everyone has sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard. <sup>24</sup>Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when He freed us from the penalty for our sins.**" I just trust, believe and accept that my sins have been forgiven because of what Jesus did on the cross."

#### B. Release my offenders and focus on the future

In other words don't let others' sins against me get under your skin because...

Your soul cannot be restored until you let go of:

##### 1) Resentment in your thoughts

## 2) Revenge in your emotions

## 3) Retaliation in your actions and choices

Let's read together what the Bible says in Ephesians 4:30-32 **“And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, He has identified you as His own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. <sup>32</sup>Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”** So, I believe that Jesus does truly forgive me for my faults, sins and flaws, and then I begin to be willing to offer forgiveness to others. I let other people off the hook, and I release my offenders so I can focus on the future. I refuse to get stuck in the past for the rest of my life.

## C. Team up with Jesus to carry my load

This is why the story of Jesus in the Gospels is called Good News. God never intended for you to go through life carrying all your grief, guilt, grudges, problems, pressures, stresses, situations—by yourself. Jesus says I want to team up with you. Matthew 11:28-30 in the MSG says this, **“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to Me!”** And notice He didn't say, “Come to a doctor, come to a class, but He says, “Come to me.” He points us to a relationship with Him. **“Get away with Me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with Me and work with Me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with Me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.”**

I want you to pray with me and you can agree with me as I represent all of us here this morning (afternoon). “God, my soul needs restoring today. I confess I don't always think right. I don't always choose right. I don't always feel right. I need You to restore my damaged soul, mind, will, and emotions. Jesus, specifically today, I want to ask Your help on the things that have done and do



damage my soul. I need Your help concerning those unaddressed grudges. I know it is hurting me to hold onto all of the hurt. I'm only hurting myself with my anger. Lord, I ask You to help with me my unconfessed guilt. I have been carrying this stuff in a large garbage bag for a long time and it's stinking terribly. I say I need Your forgiveness, and I receive it now. Thank You that You took all of my sins on Your cross. Thank You that You were wounded and crushed for me. You were beaten and You took my punishment so that I might have peace with You, myself and others. You said in Your Word that Your wounds heal my wounds. I ask You to do that. Lord, I need Your help concerning all of the losses that I have experienced, and they have caused me untold grief. Thank You that You not only feel my pain, but You are willing to heal me of all of my hurts, habits and hang ups. I say to You right now that I trust You personally to forgive my sins. Jesus, with Your help, I release the people who have hurt me, and I pray Your blessings on them. Most of all, Jesus, I want to team up with You. I ask You to help me with my life and give me Your strength." If you are here today and you have never invited Jesus Christ to be the Lord of your heart, I encourage you to pray this prayer with me right now, "Jesus Christ, today, I want to get to know You, and I want to learn to love You. I trust You and I humbly ask You to accept me into Your family, and I pray this, not because I deserve it, but because on the cross You said it was finished. You paid it all right there. Thank You. It is in Your name I pray."