

Joke: A priest, an evangelist, and a minister were in a row boat in the middle of a pond fishing. None of them had caught anything all morning.

Then the evangelist stands up and says he needs to go to the bathroom so he climbs out of the boat and walks on the water to shore. He comes back ten minutes later the same way.

Then the minister decides he needs to go to the bathroom, too, so he climbs out of the boat and walks on the water to shore. He, too, comes back the same way ten minutes later.

The priest looks at both of them and decides that his faith is just as strong as his fishing buddies and that he can walk on water, too. He stands up and excuses himself. As he steps out, he makes a big splash down into the water.

The evangelist looks at the minister and says, "I suppose we should have told him where the rocks were."

Do you suffer from FOMO?

I want to talk today about as it's termed in our social media age, FOMO. The fear of missing out. I guess it was time for me to get on this acronym bandwagon. So if you so desire you could call this message today #FOMO.

Thanks to social media, we live in a culture today where we constantly see the highlight reels of everyone else's lives. Just log in to Facebook for like 30 seconds and you can see what a few of your friends have been up to. And not that it's wrong to post those things. But if we're not careful, because of some people's insecurities, what it can create in us is a fear that, "I'm just never going to be like that. Or worse yet that I'm going to miss out."

I graduated in 1981, and so I grew up in the 70's. Well ok I'm still trying to grow up, but you know what I mean. In my childhood years they had not yet invented parental supervision, we rode around on our bikes all over the neighborhood, somebody's mom fed us a peanut butter

and jelly sandwich, and we actually drank the water from a neighbors (are you ready for this) hose attached to the outside of their house.

But today, there's so many things to sign up for, baseball, soccer, football, music, karate, swimming, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the list can go on and on. And each one is packed full with practices and weekends and travel. And they start them at such a young age, and we still expect our kids to get good grades.

And we sign up because we don't want to miss out. We don't want our kids to miss out. And It's okay to do some of those things and to want to pursue things and to experience things and take part in things. But the problem is sometimes we're so afraid that we'll miss out that we run our minds ragged trying to get it all in, trying to do it all, trying to make sure that we don't miss something.

56% of us are so scared of missing a text, an email, a message, or an event that we go no where without our phones. We are glued to them that is why on average a

person will check them over 150 times a day.

So I want to try and tackle some of this today taking our text from Psalm 23 I think this Psalm can help give us some clarity on this. This is more than a funeral reading, it is a life direction.

Let's read it together,

Psalm 23:1–6 (NIV): The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

One thing I think you can't help but notice in Psalm 23 is how personal it is. In our culture today it seems to me

that it is all about ourselves. How can I benefit? What do you have to offer me? How will this help me? We hear a lot of talk about individual achievement, what I'm doing.

But in ancient cultures, it was much more communal. When you look at how the early New Testament church operated, it was very much about the body, it was about community, it was about coming together and gathering and having people in your home all the time. It was a very hospitable culture. Now most of don't even know who are neighbors are. So you need to understand that when King David wrote this psalm, he was living in a pretty communal culture, this ancient tribal culture where family, large families, extended family... That was a big deal in his day, and yet he writes this psalm in a very personal way. To address us in community and individually.

And I want to just focus on that for a minute because the verses that we're looking at really when he talks about, "You guide me, You lead me, You prepare for me." I want you to hear that personally for your life today.

Hear this church, when you follow God, when you come to know Jesus and you begin to understand that He's the Great Shepherd, and you come into a relationship with this Great Shepherd, you begin to realize that God desires community, and yet at the same time He desires a very personal, one on one, heart to heart relationship with you that is why He called you His child. You're adopted into his family, and because of that He personally looks after your life in a very individual way. And this is extremely important to remember when we face the fear that we're going to miss out on all the cool stuff. When you feel like your not going to be one of the influencers.

Its amazing that today you can influence people by just wearing great shoes or have a Youtube channel. It's just a weird cultural moment that we're in right now. And not all those influencers are a great example by the way.

But when we get afraid that we're going to miss out on a significant life, on a life that means something, on a life of purpose, on a life that really matters, you can come back to Psalm 23 and you will realize that the Great Shepherd is not going to let that happen. He's not going to let you

miss out.

In this Kingdom journey we all get to play.

I want to give you two things that I hope will be an encouragement to you. The first, is simply this. When you follow the voice of the Shepherd, he leads you in his pathway for your life.

Jesus said in the New Testament, "I'm the great shepherd. I call my sheep. They know my voice. I know them by name."

This is a very personal relationship between the great shepherd and his sheep, and so when you follow the voice of the shepherd, he's going to call you and lead you in His path the He established for your life.

Psalms 16:11 (NIV): 11 You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Job when he was going through everything. . .

Job 23:11 (NIV): 11 My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside

Jesus also said, "I will never leave you or forsake you."

So realize this church, when you feel that your train has been derailed, know that God is right there to put you back on track. To slow you down enough so that you can get back on the track to bring you to your destination that He has given you.

I want to kind of break down the second a little bit. When the psalm said, "He leads me by the quiet waters, and he leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake," he's saying that God has a purpose for his followers. He has a pathway prepared for you. And his pathway is always significant. The reason I know that is because he said he leads us along the right paths for his name's sake, and his name is great.

Jesus said it this way. . .

John 17:4 (NIV): 4 I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.

And then He said this about us. . .

Matthew 5:16 (NIV): 16 In the same way, let your light shine

before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

God can bring glory to himself through our stories. He uses our lives. He uses our brokenness, our healing, our experiences, our pain and recovery, our experiences of sin and repentance of forgiveness. He uses all of that, all the aspects of our pathway, he uses to bring himself glory.

I love this check this out. . .

Romans 9:14–21 (NIV): 14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” 16 It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. 17 For Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” 18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. 19 One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?” 20 But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? “Shall what is

formed say to the one who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?' " 21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?

So in other words, your life has meaning, and your life has purpose because you're a child of the King, because He made you, because He shapes you into His own image, and every single person in this room, even if you don't know him or follow him, you bare his image. He has put eternity in your heart, a little piece of himself resides there whether you accept that or not it is still true.

And so, ultimately, at the end of the day, when you follow the voice of the shepherd, he has a pathway for you.

But there is a problem because we think that when He says, he leads me on the right paths. We think of God's purpose or God's pathway as this unique individual career path or that we have to attend a certain school or that there is this specific person that is going to be our spouse, that's how we often think of God's will.

We think am I making the right choices, am I finding the

one that God has for me, and we sort of have this romantic idea that we have a soulmate out there. And you might.

Maybe you have had the idea that you have to just somehow bump into this soulmate at the right moment and find them because there's no one else on the planet who could tolerate you. So you get this kind of idea that God's will is mystical and it's about connecting all the dots along the way that make up the big picture.

But the truth is it's not so much about the things that you do or the things that you achieve or the success that you find. It's much more about him leading you down the right path.

In other words, his pathway is more about who you are becoming than it is about what you're doing.

When you follow the voice of the shepherd, when you decide to root your life in a relationship with Jesus, his pathway for you is that you become more his child and more like Jesus.

You become holy, you become the righteousness of God, you become his, you get to know him, you go deeper in your walk and your relationship with God.

And if you're following the voice of the shepherd; and you're walking in paths of righteousness that he has laid down for you; and you're becoming what he wants you to become; and you're getting closer to him; and you're knowing the voice of the shepherd more and more, you don't have to make all the right decisions in life. You don't have to know ahead of time and be able to predict the exact course. He will lead you through the valleys, through the wilderness, through the circumstances of your life.

If you're following the voice of the shepherd, there will be moments when things will happen to you that you didn't choose, and yet God is going to use those moments and use those choices for his purpose, and his purpose is to make you more like Christ. You encounter things that don't make sense, but they will make you more like Christ.

Romans 8:28 (NIV): 28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

If you're committed to following Him and being lead by His voice and becoming what he wants you to be, then he's going to lead you in paths of righteousness through all of

the decisions. Through all the circumstances, as Andre Crouch sang, “through it all I’ve learned to trust in Jesus, I’ve learned to trust in God. My God will see me through.”

And so when you question, understand that he who created the world leads you through all the darkness and through all the confusion and through all the haze and through the valleys and through the hard times.

When you're listening for the voice of the shepherd as he calls you to become more like him, he leads you in the right pathway.

Thank you pastor but what does all this have to do with the fear of missing out? Glad you asked.

So let me share a couple things.

First off, if you follow him, you're not going to miss out. If you know him and you listen to him and you follow him, you're not going to miss out on his purpose for your life. You're not going to miss his meaning for you. Because he has for all of his children an eternity in mind, and he's taking us there. And we might make mistakes along the way. We might mess up and blow it and do some things

that... I mean, I look back at my life and think about decisions I made and go, "Man, I wish I'd chosen differently there or made a different choice at that moment in my life."

Listen, I have made some decisions in my life based on FOMO. And you can have all those regrets but you just need to let them wash away because at the end of the day, God is sovereign. He doesn't lose sight of the future He planned for you from the foundation of the world. God is bigger than all of that. And He knows where he's taking you. And he moves you along the pathway to get there.

It maybe rocky in certain seasons of your life as you stumble to figure out exactly the best way to follow him, but you're not going to miss out.

And secondly you need to remember that his pathway for you is personal.

In other words, I'm not going to get to heaven and go and stand before God. And have God look at me and say, "Okay, George. How did you do running Billy Graham's race? How did you do running the race of a Bill Johnson or Randy Clark? How did you do running the pathway, that I

choose for someone else?" Instead, he's going to look at me and say, "I gave you a life. How did you steward it? How did you manage it? What did you do? Did you make the most of the life that I gave you?"

In other words, to me, it's very comforting that I have a race to run, and that I don't have to run someone else's race.

FOMO will cause us to live the life we think others expect us to live, rather than the life He truly wants us to live.

Now listen I need to be honest. I hear the stories, I read the articles about what the 100 fastest growing churches in America are doing. This is what this pastor is preaching and wonder if I should do some of those things. I wonder what I'm doing wrong. Because after all that's what people take notice of, right? And sometimes I just have to go, "Wait a second, I'm not running their race. This is the race God's given me to run." And I just need to listen to His voice, do what He has called me to do. Then I will have the life He established for me.

And so I don't have to run the race of some celebrity on Instagram. I don't have to share my every step on a

Facebook post. I don't have to run the race of that super parent who's kids are involved in 19 different things, and they've got all the ribbons and awards. Being pulled in all different directions.

You don't have to be the super parent that does all the things and never messes up. And your kids always smile at the camera. That's just not real. Never happens. You've got a race to run, and your race is sometimes on a crooked pathway. And the pathway has some rocks, and it's got some valleys. And it's got some pain along the way. You're going to get sore from running your race at times. You're going to get tripped up at times. That's going to happen.

Isaiah 40:31 (NIV): but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint

You were made in the image of God, you've been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, you are in relationship with Christ. He's given you the Holy Spirit. You have all the power, all the instructions. You've got the manual, the Bible. You've got his company. Along the way, you've got

everything you need but the pathway is still not easy. It looks different for every one of us. It's personalized, and he's got this purpose for you.

But there's another truth that we need to understand because in pursuing his purpose, in purposing that pathway, we sometimes still try to get in a hurry and rush the process.

See many in the Body of Christ want to be used to do signs and wonders and give a prophetic word. They want the ability (which you have) but they don't want the intimacy that it requires. We want God to give without spending time with Him.

Purpose is one of the most sought after things in the world. Ask anyone and most will say, they want to just have purpose, meaning in this life. But yet the way we use things, time, and energy you would never know it,

The fear of missing out drives us to hustle, to grind, to keep going as fast of a pace as we can go, and so this Psalm not only tells us that he's got a pathway for us, but it also gives us something else.

Here it is. . . God not only leads you and I in the right pathway, he leads us at the right pace. And if we're not careful we'll miss that.

We'll try to do all the right things as fast as we can. We'll feel a sense of panic if I didn't get it all done, if I didn't get the right moments. If I don't read the Bible through in a year, if I forgot to pray last week.

But notice what he says, not only does he lead us in paths of righteousness for his name's sake, but sometimes the shepherd, knowing my life, knowing the culture in which I live leads me beside still waters. . .Still waters.

You ever feel like life is a level five rapids through the river of life? That's how it is sometimes sometimes. And yet we follow a shepherd who finds ways to give us breaks along the way.

Listen church I've come to realize just how important it is to find a few minutes every day and get alone with God. Go to a conference so that I can spend some time just refreshing myself in Him.

Even in the 10 commandments, he said, "Six days you should work, and on the seventh, rest." I mean think about it even God rested and well He's God.

Hear this church, the reason why we don't find a prayer closet most of the time is that it's not that important to us. We just hope that God's like Aladdin and gives us the desire of our heart.

If you want to be used by God that comes with intimacy with Him. Into me you see. We want the benefits without pursuing a relationship.

Kevin Hart said, "no matter how busy I get, I will always find time to do what is important to me."

See the problem is we get so busy because we feel guilty. So we say yes to things we should say no to.

You need to give yourself permission to choose the book so you can learn how to live.

There needs to be those moments and those seasons when I stop and rest next to the still waters.

The fact is God sometimes wants to lead us by still waters.
Where He can restore our soul

I think what we want in life is to go and go like the energizer bunny. We think being busy means being important, oh how wrong we are.

What I have found is that many are willing to trade time for money, but that is not even a fair trade. You can't buy time with money.

Sometimes God just wants us to stop and just find some time to just be quiet. And it's not easy.

Listen... this is not meant to cast a guilt trip. This is not a you should be finding more time to be quiet. I know it's hard, but it sometimes comes down simply to the choices that we make.

Do I crank up the radio or watch another program on TV, or do I just do quiet? Do I just take five minutes and just listen and say, "God, here I am. Recharge my soul. Restore me. I'm hurting. I'm stressed. I'm worn out. I'm discouraged. I can't keep up. I'm missing out."

The thing that you need to take out of this message, is this, I think the Christian life is not just what I should do. It's also who it is that I follow. You're not going to miss out, by sitting still in the presence of the Lord. You may even find that you'll do more. Stop worrying about FOMO.

That's great advice pastor.

Listen its been a tough battle for me as well. I'm learning I need to spend more time resting in a Him. I went to the prayer cabin so that I could do that. I try to find a quiet place and time during my days so that I can do that.

But the truth is, that tip I gave about being still is rooted in the character, in the identity, and the relationship that I have with a shepherd who is good and faithful to provide that for me, and He will do it for you as well.

If I respond to him, if you respond to a Him, he will lead us beside still waters. When I lean into him and depend on him, he will restore my soul. He does that through His Word, through His Spirit, through His people.

He does that on Sunday mornings when we gather with the church community.

And I know Sunday mornings are not entirely restful for everyone especially you parents with kids that you need to get ready. It's like every child you add to the family exponentially increases the lateness factor for getting to the church on time. It's complicated to get everybody's hair done and shoes on and making sure little Johnny has his underwear on and getting them out the door and in the car and to church. And usually it's a little. . . shall I say tense.

And in that moment of tension right before you pull into the parking lot. We're like, "Okay. Everybody smile. We're at church. We're here to worship Jesus. Smile. Put your best attitude's on." And we go in.

Just remember parents we are told to Enter His gates with thanksgiving and enter a His courts with praise.

But the reality is this message and these moments, they're for your soul.

They're for praise, they're for worship, of course. It's my offering to God for his glory, but when I stop and do things for his glory, he actually uses that to restore my soul. It's

just a gracious good gift of God that what I do for him is something that in turn does something amazing for me as well. When I can bless others I feel blessed.

Tell the story of waitress and grumpy WW2 vet. (\$50,000 and car

Even in church, in my quiet time, in the hustle and bustle of life, there's the chance and the opportunity to glorify God when you run your race, when you do what he wants you to do faithfully, when you go to work every day, when you go about your day.

When you do those things well and you say, "God, I want to do this the best that I can and just give this to you," whatever it is. He can use that for His glory and most of the time even for your good.

Here's the thing church, whatever it is that you do for a living, don't think, "Oh, I'm missing out. I wish I could be part of like a full time mission or ministry." No, the work that you do in your cubicle or on the assembly line, it's all for God's glory because it gives you this pathway which gives you the opportunity to tell others how good He is, and in

the midst of it all he's making you more like Jesus.