

God promises guidance

1. Intro

a. Lost

- i. The word Salvador Alvarenga knew intimately more than others
- ii. Salvador an experienced fisherman
- iii. 2012 decided to continue a fishing expedition
- iv. Even though storm was coming
- v. One day of fishing = week of income
- vi. Went w/partner to sea from western side of Mexican coast
- vii. 1 am storm hit while 75 miles out from coast
- viii. Danger of boat and lives sunk
- ix. Rushed back to coast in panic
- x. 7am only 15 miles away form coast
- xi. Can see mountains on horizon
- xii. But motor died
- xiii. No paddles
- xiv. A strong wind came and pushed them back out to ocean
- xv. They radioed for help
- xvi. Their boss said they are on the way
- xvii. But battery died =radio died
- xviii. A search party conducted

- xix. But gave up after searching many days
- xx. Now 280 miles out from land
- xxi. 4 months later partner became depressed, stop eating, starved to death
- xxii. 11 months later, Salvador 5000 miles out in the middle of pacific ocean
- xxiii. He was about as far in the ocean as the US is from Italy
- xxiv. The pacific ocean so big you can fit all the continents in the world in it and still have room left over
- xxv. 1/3 of entire mass of earth
- xxvi. Salvador was lost

b. Lost times

- i. No other time in recent history where we feel more lost
- ii. Just like Salvador didn't plan on getting lost in the Pacific Ocean, no one planned on COVID
- iii. Just like Salvador we've all been stranded at sea
- iv. Unsure if we'll ever find land
- v. Unsure if we'll ever return to normal
- vi. It seems now that we're in sight of land in horizon
- vii. Looks like things returning to normal
- viii. But just like Salvador we don't know if a strong wind might blow us right back into the ocean of lostness
- ix. We are all lost in this ocean of uncertainty

c. A guide

- i. We need a guide

- ii. Good news
- iii. God = our guide
- iv. God promises to guide his people
- v. His people are never lost -> he guides them
- vi. Just as Israelites never actually lost in wilderness
- vii. God guided them right to the promise land
- viii. And God has promises today to guide us
- ix. So that we are not lost

2. Who is your guide? (v.1)

- a. Not everyone is guided by God
- b. But David was
- c. V.1 – Yahweh is David’s shepherd
 - i. He doesn’t say ‘adonai’ = lord
 - ii. He uses God’s personal name
 - iii. Important = shows us intimacy David has with God = calling God by name
 - iv. He doesn’t call shepherd ‘master’ or ‘sir’ but by his name ‘Yahweh’
- d. Application
 - i. Difference between Christians/non-Christian
 - 1. Christians know God intimate manner as father and child
 - 2. False religions: Catholicism/Islam
 - a. Purely external

- b. Jesus said Matt 15:8, ‘these people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.’
 - c. They are not intimate with God
- e. ‘My’ shepherd
 - i. Maybe most important word (my) in the psalm
 - ii. Not only David calls God by name
 - iii. But he calls Yahweh: ‘my’ shepherd (v.1)
 - iv. David does not say
 - 1. ‘your shepherd’ – not assuming you are also a believer
 - 2. ‘our shepherd’ – that as a group call Yahweh our God
 - a. After all people follow big groups/crowds
 - b. And also hide in them
 - v. David says ‘my’ shepherd
 - 1. David saying, I don’t know about you, but Yahweh is ‘my’ shepherd
 - vi. David has full intimacy with God = name + ‘my’ shepherd
- f. Application
 - i. Ask yourself today, ‘is Jesus ‘my’ shepherd?’
 - ii. Many people claim to be shepherds as well
 - 1. King Hammurabi
 - 2. Babylonian God ‘Shamash’
 - 3. Today’s shepherds
 - a. Culture

- b. Media
- c. Celebrities on IG
- d. All acting as shepherds
 - i. People on Instagram guide their sheep
 - ii. Teaching that the only way women are valuable is if they are lusted after
 - iii. So teach them to dress inappropriately
 - iv. Do you follow that?
- e. News
 - i. Telling you when to be afraid
 - ii. How exactly to live your life
 - iii. News your shepherd?
- iii. Who is your shepherd?
- g. If Jesus is your shepherd = your heart is content
 - i. 'I shall not want' (v.1)
 - ii. Shepherds of this world never lead their sheep to satisfaction
 - 1. Wages of sin = death
 - 2. Sin never brings satisfaction
 - a. Only hunger
 - b. Hunger leading to starvation
 - c. Starvation leading to death
 - iii. But Jesus the good shepherd provides all
 - 1. Provides everything we need

2. So we no longer want
3. We are perfectly content
4. No longer craving useless things

iv. Application

1. If Jesus is your shepherd look at your life
2. See if you are content in Christ
3. Or are you constantly coveting and craving, wanting
 - a. Latest clothes
 - b. Gadgets
 - c. Etc.

v. Gospel

1. But if Jesus is not your shepherd
2. You are full of lack
3. And you are on your own
4. GOSPEL

3. Transition: So if Jesus is your shepherd, then let's begin his wonderful promises of guidance for you

1. God guides us to peace (read entire v.2)
 - a. Making sheep lie down

i. Preparing for sermon

1. Had to become zoologist
2. Study sheep

ii. Nature of sheep

1. Very fearful
2. Require a lot of care
3. They don't know where to find green pastures or water
4. Don't know how to care for themselves
5. Because of all these things it is almost impossible for sheep to lie down

iii. How to make sheep lie down

1. Free from fear
 - a. Can't defend themselves
 - b. Instance
 - i. 2 dogs killed 292 sheep
 - ii. That's how weak sheep are
 - iii. Imagine your dog slaughtering 100 sheep right now
 - iv. Maybelle and I have a Shiba Inu called mochi
 - v. Whom we are considering changing the name to dogecoin
 - vi. But she's not very big and I could never imagine ripping apart 100 sheep

- vii. Can't imagine but now you can
 - viii. Because you know how defenseless sheep are
 - ix. What are they going to 'baa'?
 - 2. Free from tension
 - a. Sheep social life lots of drama/gossip
 - b. Powerful sheep drive other sheep from the best grass
 - c. Lots of tension between other sheep
 - 3. Free from aggravation
 - a. Sheep always under attack from ticks fleas
 - b. If not cleaned sheep become very aggravated
 - 4. Free from hunger
 - a. Obvious
 - b. Sheep need their grass
 - iv. Sheep can not solve these problems on their own
 - v. Not self sufficient
- b. The shepherd makes sheep lie down
 - i. But the shepherd can solve
 - 1. Shepherd protects it's sheep from wolves
 - 2. Cleans them
 - 3. Feeds them
 - 4. His very presence actually ends a lot of the sheep drama and
brings the sheep peace
 - ii. The shepherd guides them to green pastures

1. Again sheep don't know where to find the pasture
2. Christian pastures = God's word
 - a. The Christian's pasture = paper = God's word
 - b. Psalm 119:103 – '103 How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!'
3. Application
 - a. When God guides you to peace by taking you to the green pastures of his word,
 - i. Do you eat it?
 - ii. Do you graze on scripture?
 - b. Illustration – Spoiled appetite
 - i. We know why our parents taught us to not eat dessert first
 - ii. Because it would spoil appetite no?
 - iii. Application
 1. Do you feel that the word is not very appetizing to you lately?
 2. Then ask yourself, Has the desert of the world ruined your appetite for the word?
 3. When God guides us to green grass of scripture, we must eat.
- iii. The shepherd guides them to quiet waters (v.2)
 1. 'He leads me beside quiet waters'

- a. Not raging rapids
- b. But slow creeks
- c. Streams
- d. Peaceful waters
- e. God brings us to a place of peace

2. Peace of God

- a. Phi 4:6-7 says,

⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all ^[d]comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus

c. Application

- i. When we pray to God with our requests and thanksgiving
- ii. Peace of God comes to hearts and minds
- iii. Peace of God is so great we can't even understand it fully!
- iv. Even in the worst situations we have peace
- v. We can't explain it fully because God's peace = so powerful
- vi. He guides us to peace
- vii. Remember in your life God will guide you to peace
- viii. Even if you are full of worry, he will make you lie down
- ix. He will guide you to his word
- x. He will settle all your fears/anxieties

xi. He will care for you

xii. He will guide you to peace because he is your shepherd

2. God guides us to restoration

a. 'He restores my soul' (v.3)

i. Restoration

1. Everyone needs restoration

ii. Illustration

1. As we drive through one of the richest counties in the world in

Fairfax county

2. We see a lot of beautiful houses

3. But we oddly come across some very ugly ones too

4. Those houses out in the middle of nowhere

5. In the middle of this huge plot of land

6. That look abandoned

7. Looks like the house got lost!

8. But that's how home renovators make big money

9. They invest a good amount of money into renovating it so they
can make profit out of it

10. They make the house look beautiful again

iii. Jesus restores us

1. This is what Jesus does

2. He goes out and finds the lost sheep

3. And he restores them he brings them back into the fold

4. He puts on the elegant coat and ring on the prodigal son
5. And throws a huge feast for him

iv. Application

1. Some of you have gone astray from the lord
2. Sheep easily go astray and get lost
3. But if Jesus is your shepherd he will restore you, he will bring you back!
4. Others might not have necessarily strayed but are just weary!
5. Your heart is starting to rust!

v. Jesus brings rest

1. Matt 11:28-30, ²⁸ “Come to Me, all ^[z]who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is ^[aa]easy and My burden is light.”
2. We live in a painful/sinful world
3. We can feel that slow rust over time not merely in our aging bodies
4. But also our soul
5. That’s why Jesus promises to bring you rest
6. To restore your soul so that you can do what 1 Th 5:16 says, to ‘rejoice always!’

vi. Application

1. We all know the importance of a vacation don't we?
2. How fun it is and how we feel reenergized after!
3. Yet no matter how many vacations or luxuries people have
4. People still are wearied
5. Because only Jesus can bring restoration to the soul
6. If you've been feeling wearied, apathetic, ask God to restore your soul
7. And trust that he will guide you to restoration!

3. God guides us to righteousness

- a. 'He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake' (v.3)
- b. 2 paths
 - i. Path of wickedness
 - ii. Path of righteousness
- c. Sinful nature
 - i. Sinners always choose the path of wickedness
 - ii. Even Christians who had the old man crucified with Jesus can still struggle with this
 - iii. Paul talks about this struggle in Romans 7:19-20, 19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.
 1. Paul saying that although he is a new creation on the inside and wants to do good

2. He still lives with the flesh that sins even though he doesn't want to
 3. Even Christians live in a life of battle with the flesh
 4. But Paul gives hope in the following verses Romans 7:24-25, '24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from [r]the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.'
 5. Paul gives hope because Jesus delivers us!
 6. Even though we live a daily struggle with the flesh Jesus will deliver us!
- d. Jesus guides us to the right way
- i. Eph 2:10 says, '10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.'
 1. God created us for good works
 2. And already prepared the good works that we will do even before we do them! - ii. God truly guides us to righteousness
- e. The motive
- i. Why does God guide us to righteousness?
 1. To make us look cool?

ii. No, 'for his name's sake'

1. God guides us because his reputation is on the line
2. If his children are not spiritually strong, unbelievers would think that God doesn't care for his people!
3. Moses appealed to God's reputation when God offered to Moses to wipe out the Israelites for their sin against him and to make a new nation out of Moses!
4. But Moses said to God that if he did that then the nations would mock God for destroying his own people!

f. Why not for just for our sake?

- i. But is it so bad just to make us righteous for our sake?
- ii. If God did so and made you so righteous and glorious
- iii. It would cause you and others to worship you!
- iv. God does for his name sake so that you can see how wonderful and caring God is
- v. So that you and others will worship not you but God!

g. Application

- i. Maybe right now you're in a difficult place
- ii. You don't know where you're going
- iii. Or you're even going the wrong way
- iv. Have confidence that God will lead you the right way
- v. Even if you have been struggling with a sin for a while
- vi. Put your trust in God that he will lead you to righteousness!

4. God guides us through difficulty

- a. 'Even though I walk through the valley of shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me.' (v.4)
- b. Difficult paths are still the right ones
 - i. In order to get to green pastures
 - ii. Shepherds would have to take the sheep through difficult paths
 - iii. Narrow valleys that were dark
 - iv. Full of bandits and wolves
 - v. Dangerous
 - vi. But just because dangerous doesn't mean it was the wrong way
 - vii. No it's the necessary path
 - viii. Paths of righteousness are not always silky smooth but sometimes rough and bumpy
- c. Today's valley of shadow of death
 - i. Have we not been walking through the valley of shadow of death the past year?
 - ii. All we hear about is death
 - 1. COVID
 - 2. And now missiles fired by the terrorist group Hamas at Israel
 - iii. People are constantly in panic and fear of death
- d. David's fearlessness
 - i. Yet David says, 'I fear no evil, for you are with me' (v.4)
 - 1. Even though we walk through this valley of death

2. We are not afraid because God is with us

e. The unbeliever's fearfulness

- i. Unbelievers are always panicking
- ii. Rightfully so = God is not with them
- iii. Unfortunately sometimes Christians also act as if God wasn't with them

f. Application

- i. How did you react to all the news of fear and panic the past year and today?
- ii. Did you panic like the unbelievers who have no hope?
- iii. Did you center your life completely on the fear of death?
- iv. Or did you have the peace of God that transcends all understanding because you know that he is with you?
- v. If you look back and it looked more like fear and panic than peace
 - 1. I want you to remember that God is with you
 - 2. You don't need to fear anything
 - a. Darkness
 - b. Death
 - 3. Because he is with you
 - 4. God is the one who has appointed the place and time of your death
 - 5. Famous preacher George Whitfield says, 'you are immortal until it is God's time'

6. You are immortal until it is God's time for you to come home!

g. God defends you

i. 'Your rod'

1. The rod was basically a beat stick like a baseball bat that was used to defend the sheep from wolves

ii. God defends you as well

iii. No one can touch you unless God allows it

iv. Remember Job?

1. Satan complained to God saying that he can't touch God because of the hedge of protection God placed on Job!

v. God protects his sheep from losing salvation

1. John 10:27-28 says, '27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.'

a. No one can snatch your salvation from the hand of the good shepherd

b. Your salvation rests eternally secure in the hand of Jesus

h. God guides and disciplines you

i. 'Your staff'

1. The shepherd also had a staff

2. Classic curved shaped staff that shepherds hold

3. They used it to guide their sheep and sometimes to also poke their sheep in the right direction

ii. God guides as well and sometimes he may have to discipline us

1. But he doesn't crack the whip like a cruel master

2. He does it out of love

3. Like a parent preventing his child from touching the hot stove

4. Hebrews 12:6-7 says, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,

Nor faint when you are reproved by Him;

6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines,

And He scourges every son whom He receives." ⁷ It is for

discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons;

for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline

5. The writer of Hebrew says don't distress when God corrects or disciplines you!

6. He does it because he loves you!

7. No loving father refuses to discipline his child

8. You know who what child parents refuse to discipline?

9. Somebody else's child!

10. If God disciplines you it means you're his child!

11. Whenever God needs to poke you in the right direction don't see it as cruelty but as his love for you!

i. Application

- i. This is how God guides us through difficulty
- ii. He protects, guides us and disciplines us
- iii. His very presence comforts
- iv. With God by our side he guides through any difficulty!

5. God guides us to worship

a. Worship = The flavor of life

- i. What is life without enjoyment/celebration?
- ii. Even more what is life without worship?
- iii. And this is exactly what God guides us to: worship

b. 'You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies' (v.5) –

Worship in difficult relationships

- i. Everyone can probably think of a person they rather not see no?
- ii. Now imagine that person at your party
- iii. Not very pleasant is it?
- iv. It would make the party far less enjoyable right?
- v. But incredibly in God's party

- 1. You are enjoying
- 2. Feasting to the fullest
- 3. Even while your enemy is there!

c. Endless food and drink – 'You have anointed my head with oil, my cup overflows' (v.5)

- i. In God's feast, God is providing an overabundance of food and drink
- ii. Ever been to a party where the food runs out? Not fun anymore

- iii. But not in God's party!
- iv. Even when you're having the most conflict in your relationships
 - 1. Spouse
 - 2. Brother
 - 3. Son
 - 4. Daughter
 - 5. Friend
 - 6. Coworker
- v. God is providing you an unending feast of worship!

d. Application

- i. Even in these difficult relationships and conflicts that you remember
- ii. Were you feasting at God's table?

e. Illustration

- i. It's true that the people closest hurt as the most
- ii. Jesus at the last supper, at his feast was betrayed by Judas
 - 1. Judas was very near and dear to Jesus
 - 2. But Judas hated Jesus and betrayed him
 - 3. Yet Jesus continued to love him and serve him to the end!
 - 4. Because Jesus was too busy feasting at the table of God rather than worrying/bickering with Judas!

f. Application

- i. If you have bitterness with someone
- ii. Or you've been hurt by someone

- iii. I encourage you to feast at the table of God
- iv. Where he has a lavish banquet for you!
- v. Full of all your favorite food!
 - 1. The rice = the word of God
 - 2. The lechon = the joy of God
 - 3. The halo-halo = the love of God
 - 4. The bagoong = the justice of God
- vi. God's feast is every wonderful truth about God that fills your spiritual belly and heart
- vii. So that you love and serve even those who hate you!

g. Spiritual food coma

- i. And what is a good meal without a good coma?
 - 1. Actually I've been eating healthy keto for 7+ years
 - 2. And I don't get food coma but that's beside the point!
- ii. David is certainly having a spiritual food coma! 'Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life' (v.5)
 - 1. 'Surely' – David is emphatically declaring with a shadow of a doubt with absolute certainty that what he's about to say is true!
 - a. We all feel a certain joy and peace when we have a good meal!
 - 2. 2 attributes of God

- a. Goodness- All of God's wonderful benefits that we have in Jesus, his love, peace, provision, guidance etc.
 - b. Lovingkindness- Hebrew 'hesed' God's loyal love, God's faithful love. Like a husband loyal love to his wife because of the vow he made
3. Goodness and lovingkindness pursue!
- a. 'Follow me' – The word follow actually means pursue!
 - b. To chase after!
 - c. Illustration
 - i. I loved playing racing games as a kid
 - ii. One of my favorite games was NFS: Hot Pursuit
 - iii. Only 2 roles: you place as the police or the illegal racer
 - iv. If choose the police you pursue these illegal street racers at high speeds to catch them and arrest them
 - v. You would try to stop them by ramming your police vehicle right into them to disable their car
 - vi. Of if you choose the illegal racer, you would drive as fast as you can 200mph+ to get away from the police
4. How long is this pursuit?
- a. 'All the days of my life'

- i. Most high speed chases don't last too long
- ii. No more than hours
- iii. But God's pursuit for you happens your entire life!

b. Application

- i. Imagine God's goodness and loving-kindness were the police pursuing you, hunting you down
- ii. Trying to ram you to stop you
- iii. And give you goodness and lovingkindness!
- iv. And then do it all over again for the rest of your life!
- v. There is no doubt that if you are a Christian that you will receive God's goodness and loving-kindness

h. Arresting the pursuant

- i. Where do the people caught by police end up? Jail
- ii. Where do people end caught by God's goodness and lovingkindness end up? God's house
- iii. 'And I will dwell in the house of Yahweh forever' (v.6)

1. Place of comfort

- a. Dwell means to literally sit
- b. That you have unpacked your stuff got comfortable and sat down

2. How many nights booked?
 - a. This is not simply for the night
 - b. A week
 - c. Or even months
 - d. This is forever!
3. Living in God's presence
 - a. Living in the house of God means to live in God's presence forever!
4. Illustration
 - a. Some of living with parents might be thinking 'I want to live with my parents forever!'
 - b. And some are thinking 'boy I can't get wait to get out!'
 - c. Depends on your age right?
5. Application
 - a. But as believers there is not a split on whether we want to live in God's house or not!
 - b. No it's a fact that now as children of God we live in this house forever!
6. Illustration
 - a. Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
 - i. Wonderful famous 90's show
 - ii. Loved this show growing up as a kid

- iii. Will Smith growing up rough neighborhood
Phily with thugs
- iv. Got into trouble so mom sent him to live with
his wealthy aunt and uncle
- v. In a luxurious mansion in Bel-Air
- vi. Much of the comedy
 - 1. Seeing the hoodlum main character
adjusting from his street way of living
 - 2. Into a more civilized way of living
 - 3. And really the wonderful joy of living
with them

b. Application

- i. Imagine living in the ghetto
- ii. Knowing only wickedness
- iii. And then your suddenly transported to live in
the most prosperous area in the world
- iv. With a beautiful mansion, swimming pool
- v. With highly successful relatives who can teach
you the way!
- vi. How much more as Christians
 - 1. Who lived in the the streets of darkness
 - 2. And have been lovingly brought in by
Jesus to live in glorious house of God!

vii. No matter where you are currently living

1. Whether with parents
2. With your spouse and kids
3. Or maybe having that comfy place all to yourself
4. Remember that if you are a believer
5. You may be living in these places
6. But you are really living in the house of God
7. Your heart is living in the house of God!
8. No matter what worries or pains or struggles you have in this world
9. Remember that God guides you to worship him even amidst difficult relationships
10. And that he brings you into his presence forever!

6. Conclusion

a. Salvador Alvarenga continued

- i. Few days later Salvador Alvarenga ended up on the island called Ebon Atoll part of the Marshall Islands
- ii. This was 7,000 miles away from the coast of Mexico
- iii. That's as far as Canada is from the Philippines

- iv. In fact if he missed Ebon Atoll
- v. The next land he would have reached would've been the Philippines more than 2,000 miles away
- vi. Which would have took almost another year
- vii. Thankfully this didn't happen and Salvador Alvarenga upon immediately arriving on land, found a home and asked for help
- viii. And he was shortly flown back to his home country of El Salvador
- ix. After being lost at sea for 438 days
- x. Church if any of you feel lost today,
- xi. Remember that God will guide you
- xii. You will never be lost if God is your shepherd
- xiii. God is always guiding you and if you stray he will always find you