

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures!



By Bala Samson

Psalm 23:2 "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."

The above scripture is so pleasurable and comforting, because it encourages you in the midst of pain, sorrow and loss! I make my school kids memorize the above chapter and narrate in the assembly before we start the day.

Today's generation have an insatiable thirst for vacation, exotic holiday spots, which they feel is the only way to unwind and rest! Our youngsters who do not even attend worship on Sundays, are busy navigating the roads for new pubs, cinema theatres, parks and malls to spend their time and rest! Is it any wonder that instead of finding rest, they end up in a mess!

**You have a
PERMANET GOD
who would never
ever leave you!**

When you are without a permanent home, permanent job, permanent income, permanent friend to rely on, permanent shoulder to lean on, then you realize you have a PERMANET GOD who would never ever leave you! Did you know, did you know.....He would run to you at a time when

you are weak, tender and fragile with none to hold you! It is better to be a broken vessel with Him by our side than being puffed up with the world and riches by our side! Give Him a shout of praise please! He is worthy! I am able to write this piece with integrity because today I own nothing but Him! I may not have enough money for the next month rent but I have enough peace in HIM, to rest in peace, trusting Him to supply all my needs. There is such peace and tranquility in Him, when the world around is flummoxed and bemused! Hallelujah!

Diagnosed with multiple fibroids, placenta being misplaced and in the fifth month

of pregnancy, I was admitted in the emergency ward of the hospital bleeding profusely. This is crisis to a normal eye! But it was during this time of crisis and being abandoned in the emergency ward that I brought my 'big Bible' that was gifted for my marriage, into my hospital room, and I started flipping the pages with great reverence, eagerness and earnestness; God started speaking to me awesomely and I received lessons on faith, love, joy, peace and happiness right there in the hospital room. Amen. Clap and shout with joy people! He is awesome! God ripped off all hypocrisy right there and I started climbing into His Lap to learn more of Him! Man, my life changed! I remember the words of Isaiah here:

- Isaiah 49:9 "That You may say to the prisoners, 'Go forth,' To those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.' " They shall feed along the roads, And their pastures shall be on all desolate heights.
- They shall neither hunger nor thirst, Neither heat nor sun shall strike them; For He who has mercy on them will lead them, Even by the springs of water He will guide them."

Observe the words 'their pastures shall be on all desolate heights!' When God is with you, even deserts and wilderness turn out to be green pastures and He would make you lie and rest there! Amen. Ang Lee, Director of the latest blockbuster movie Life of Pi, explained the mood and feeling that the lullaby song should evoke to Carnatic vocalist Bombay Jayashri before she sang the lullaby song that has now bagged an Oscar nomination and these are his words: 'the child sleeps not because he is sleepy but because he feels safe.'

This is temporary peace that the 'world' offers: good, soothing music, consoling words of a friend, or a mother's comforting hands – these are all temporary; what stands with you 'forever' in the midst of pain and sorrow are the words of God that would comfort you not to sleep but to stay awake and still rest in His everlasting arms. Give Him a shout of joy please! If you have been basking and finding rest in perishing things like a good rewarding job, handsome salaries, plum jobs in an affluent country, wonderful health, luxurious apartment, mom's love and a dear friend's help; let me warn you, they would all depart and then there is nothing left but the everlasting Hands of God to steady you. Beware!

The doctors would come into my room, and spread gloom with medical reports: terminate the pregnancy, your condition is critical, the abortion has to be done NOW. Nothing affected me because I was drinking from the Bible every second of the day! My entire testimony is posted on the website, check 'About us' to read it fully with pictures of my 'miracle kid Joshua.' The hospital room turned out to be a green pasture- land of rest for me because I chose not to buckle down to the lie of the enemy but trust His Word and rest in His Arms. Choice is yours today!

Don't look at the circumstances but focus on His promises! You may be without

a job today, may be single, bedridden, forsaken by your loved ones, financially broke and depressed; I suggest you to separate time to be with God in prayer and read His Word. It might sound surreal! When your husband is having a whale of time with his girlfriend, you might wonder what use would it serve to sit and read the Bible instead of filing a divorce? Try my advice and you will surely find rest in your life!

Jesus said:” Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. “(Mathew 11:28)

Further, I give experts of my preaching points on the above subject that would help Pastors and preachers:

a) ***There is REST when we have hope in the Lord:***

David was able to sing songs of praises in the wilderness and while he had his enemies hounding for his blood, because he had put His God before him. He woke up in the morning not with Facebook or with movie music, but he woke up singing praises for His Lord. Read his words:

Psalm 16: 8,9” I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. “ Hope comes bubbling inside our hearts, when we put God before us and give Him the number one priority in our lives, right from the time we wake up in the morning; not the kitchen, gym or newspaper – give Him the first place and watch your life prosper. We are in distress, poverty, lack and sickness because we have failed to put God first in our lives. Let us make amendments to find rest in God.

Stop waking up with fear and trepidation regarding your future, family and career! Obey and surrender to enjoy peace in your life! It is not about having something substantial in our hands to have peace, but you can have this peace even without anything – say Amen. Apostle Paul speaks about this awesomely in the book of Philippians 4: 6” Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” I repeat – be anxious for nothing!

b) ***His presence will give us rest:***

When Moses was disturbed and pained because of the sins of the Israelites, God looked at him and said: "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Exodus 33:14 Awesome promise! What else do we need?

Sheep being timid in nature, has a normal tendency to be restless, they are able to lie down and rest only when their bellies are full, fear removed and when they are comfortable. Nothing gives them peace more than the sight of the shepherd that watches over them! Is this not a beautiful picture of a Christian life, where we find rest and peace with Jesus our Savior who watches over us?

Read more of David's soothing words, that would surely calm your spirit:

Psalm 121:4"Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD is your keeper; The LORD is your shade at your right hand.

6 The sun shall not strike you by day, Nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul.

8 The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore."

He is watching over you! Relax!

c. **We have rest when we have a good leader who teaches us the Word:**

A Christian living in this restless, greedy, discontented society would be able to rest in peace only if He has a good Leader to counsel him in the right path. Are you listening? We need a good church where the Word is preached and the Pastor leads his flock in the path of righteousness. The Lord said: Ezekiel 34:14"I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down."

Under the leadership of Joshua, the Israelites finally found rest when they obeyed the commandments of God as taught by Joshua, read: Joshua 21:44"The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass."

Dear friends, peace and rest follow obedience!

d. **Remove sins to have rest!**

C'mon you cannot have rest with a snake in your bag! Are you listening? As long as you are tied up with sins, there is no rest! Make a note of that. When Zaccheus came face to face with Jesus, he did not allow Him to pass by, instead when he heard the voice of Jesus call him," Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house", he received Him joyfully. The result was salvation in his house by throwing away the sins and unrighteous money from his life. Unfettered desires and greed are the reasons for misery today! Learn to be content and settle for a simple life rather than ape the affluent life-style and get into debts. If God is speaking with you right now, please walk away from sins, no matter how many years of association you may have with sin. Walk out before you are ruined! Procrastination will destroy you!

e. **We have rest and peace in Christ and not outside Him:**

Jesus said: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27) We huff and puff and run crazily to amass worldly material so that we could relax and feel

secure, forsaking God and His assembly; alas, we have brought our lives to an embarrassing mess! Many don't need outside source to ruin their lives, they trip themselves up!

-Illegal relationship, extra marital affairs, shady business deals, unrighteousness, dishonesty, thefts, drunkenness and unscrupulous spending would all land you in trouble. Beware!

Never skip jobs haphazardly, do not relocate to foreign locations without proper analysis, hasty move may be terribly devastating. More money, more luxury, more comfort, academic resources, are not the key elements that we should explore; such joyful languor would take you downhill would one day; seek if there are good churches around for you, kids and family. These are the last days, be careful! Seek for spiritual counsel and prayer from a reliable good servant of God.

Rev Billy Graham at the age of 92, despite the pain, discomfort and sufferings related to old age, he was able to write a beautiful book 'Nearing Home' where he talks about the peace and comfort that he finds in God. Having lost his beloved wife, dad, mom and most of his dear ones, yet in the midst of all this loss, he rests in God and with a hope to see Him soon. Rev Graham says, 'There is great comfort available, even to the aged, when we remember Him.'

In the wilderness of Judah, David sang:

- Psalm 63: 4"Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.
- My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.
- When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches."

God bless you!