



This Week's Message  
January 21, 2024

*Psalm 23:5*

*...thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

Psalm 23:  
(New International Version)

**Sunday's Scripture Reading**  
**Psalm 23**

<sup>1</sup>The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
<sup>2</sup>He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.  
<sup>3</sup>He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
<sup>4</sup>Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
<sup>5</sup>Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.  
<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

—King James Version.

<sup>1</sup>Jehovah [is] my shepherd, I do not lack,  
<sup>2</sup>In pastures of tender grass He causeth me to lie down, By quiet waters He doth lead me.  
<sup>3</sup>My soul He refresheth, He leadeth me in paths of righteousness, For His name's sake,  
<sup>4</sup>Also – when I walk in a valley of death-shade, I fear no evil, for Thou [art] with me, Thy rod and Thy staff – they comfort me.  
<sup>5</sup>Thou arranges before me a table, Over-against my adversaries, Thou hast anointed with oil my head, My cup is full!  
<sup>6</sup>Only – goodness and kindness pursue me, All the days of my life, And my dwelling [is] in the house of Jehovah, For a length of days!

—Young's Literal Translation

On Sunday, I will continue the series of messages from the 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm, completing verse 5, which says, *thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

This week, for the second version of the 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm, I have included the passage from Young's Literal Translation. It is not a very well-known translation, but I have included it more for the purpose of making a point, which is this – when anyone speaks of a *literal* translation of the Bible, or that they take the Bible *literally* – my skeptical antenna goes up immediately. The reason for this is, *what does the word literal mean?* I understand that sounds like a bit of a silly question, because *literal* means *literal*, right? Well...

Here's the point I want to make. When translators work with the Biblical text, do they seek to translate the text as closely as possible to the wording of the Biblical languages, or do they seek to translate the meaning of the words in the text? That is an easy question to answer, actually, as the translators seek to capture the wording as closely as possible, without being as concerned with translating the meaning. The difficulty in this approach comes to us on several levels. To begin with, it is impossible

*Questions to Consider –*

\* Would you prefer to have a version of the Bible that concentrates on a literal translation of the words, or one that focuses on translating the meaning?

\* In what ways does the cup of your life overflow? What are the blessings in your life? What are the one or two things for which you are most grateful?

\* Read the story of the man who was paralyzed, in Luke 5:17-20. In what ways were the man's friends a blessing to him? How have your friends been a blessing to you?

\* In Philippians 1:3 Paul writes *I thank my God every time I remember you*. Who are the people for whom you say *I thank my God every time I remember you*?

\* What role does faith play in gratitude? Does faith make us more grateful?

\* One of the overlooked parts of verse 5 is the phrase, *thou anointest my head with oil*. An anointing with oil can signify that a person has been set aside, or has been commissioned for, a particular task. Do you believe you have been set aside by God?

to be completely literal when translating from one language to another. As you will see in the text of the Young's Literal Version, several words are bracketed in, which is for the purpose of making those verses more readable. When you add words, the literal nature of the translation is already gone. But the greater

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difficulty is in the fact that the meaning of many verses is not translated, which can lead to the misunderstanding of some passages. Consider, as an example, John 21:15-17, where Jesus asks Peter three times, *Simon son of John, do you love me?* It is an interesting discussion, made more interesting by the fact that English only has one word for *love*, while the Greek language has four words. In that exchange, John records Jesus and Peter as using different words for *love*. John records that Jesus uses the word *agape*, which is the greatest expression of love, while Peter is shown as using the word *philos*, which is a lesser expression of love. Jesus is seeking to draw Peter into a greater commitment of love in following after him, but there appears to be some hesitation on the part of Peter. Without knowing this fact about the Greek language, the meaning of the passage is easily misconstrued when read in English. Reading in English, most people assume Jesus asks Peter the question three times as a response to Peter's three denials, but when reading in the original language of Greek, we find that to not be the case. So, in translating literally, the meaning is lost, literally, in translation.

What is obvious in verse 5 of the 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm, I believe, is that we are reminded of the blessings and gifts we have been given in life. It often appears that our response to life has a default setting of complaining, while David asks in the psalm that we live a life of gratitude and thankfulness. David was someone who could easily have offered a litany of complaints, but he did not. Instead, in this psalm, David is considering all the blessings he has received. We can all complain – and there are times when we have matters that are legitimate complaints – but let us operate out of a default setting of thankfulness.

I look forward to seeing you on Sunday – God bless you!