

Challenge

THE GOOD NEWS PAPER

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Psalms 23 is a small passage of scripture but it is just so full of truth. The second half of verse 5 says, "You anoint my head with oil, my cup runs over." So often our view of this psalm can be seen in the light of meeting our physical needs only, however, this section of Psalm 23 reveals to us that God is vitally interested in meeting our daily spiritual needs.

The anointing with oil introduces to us a symbol of the Holy Spirit and the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit. The shepherd used oil as a means of protecting his flock from some sinister dangers. Two examples in particular stand out. The first one was the risk of sheep being bitten by snakes. The viper lives in a hole in the ground and as the sheep grazed there was always the danger that a snake would poke its head up and bite the unsuspecting sheep.

The shepherd dealt with this problem by doing a survey of the pasture where he was leading his sheep. If he spotted any viper hole he would get out his container of oil and pour out a ring of oil around the hole. The oil, at least for a while, would prevent the viper emerging from the hole to attack the shepherd's flock.

The other example where oil was such an important part of the shepherd caring for his flock was as an insect repellent. Insects of various kinds can make life almost unbearable for some animals. For sheep the appearance of the nasal fly can cause great consternation. These flies lay their eggs in the soft tissue membrane of the sheep's nose, and once the larvae emerge they start to burrow into the very sensitive nasal tissue, which can drive a sheep literally mad.

In a vain attempt to gain some relief from what must be excruciating pain, the sheep will deliberately beat their heads against trees, rocks, posts or thick brush. In the worst of cases a sheep may even kill itself to get rid of the pain. So it is no surprise when a swarm of nose flies arrive that a flock of sheep can start to panic by running around, trying to hide in rocks or brush to escape. The shepherd knows that his sheep are troubled because they throw their heads back for hours. Some of the sheep stop eating and their general health can start to deteriorate.

To stop all of this unsettled behaviour the shepherd anoints the sheep's head with some scented oil. The scent keeps the flies at bay and as a result peace returns to the minds of the sheep. If we as Christians are going to be the witnesses, that we know God wants us to be, we need to be filled, anointed, empowered by the Holy Spirit, so that regardless of the circumstances we are at peace within ourselves.

It is not long before you can see whether a person is filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit. Our reaction to a problem situation or a word of criticism, or an unkind action soon tells us whether a person is controlled by the Holy Spirit. Ephesians chapter 5v18 says this, "And do not be drunk with wine.... But be filled with the Holy Spirit." Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not an optional extra to the Christian life, but foundational and fundamental to a fruitful Christian life and service.

The tense of this verse indicates that we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit and keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit moment by moment. The word filled can be a bit misleading because it can distract us from the fact that the Holy Spirit is not some nebulous force or influence or liquid. We are to be controlled by the Holy Spirit in our thoughts, choices and appetites.

It is interesting that the shepherd anoints the head of the sheep and as a result it brings a rest to the remaining parts of the body. We as Christians need to have the anointing work of the Holy Spirit upon our minds. The mind is the critical area that the enemy guns for when he wants us to cave into temptation. If he controls the mind he controls everything else. This is why the writer of the book of Proverbs says, "As a man thinks so is he." How we think ultimately determines how we act. Talk to someone who has been hooked on Internet pornography. Asked them how they got hooked and they will tell you that one day they made a choice to open an email, and very quickly they lost control of their minds.

Oil was often used by the shepherd to help sheep who had been hurt or wounded in some way. How we need the healing balm of the Holy Spirit to deal with our hurts, those relational wounds that have been weeping for years. Often we battle with forgiveness, bitterness, or hurt because something has not turned out the way we had expected. Just recently a friend applied for a job which he felt he was most suitable for. Unfortunately he was not appointed and as a result he has decided to move on from his employment feeling somewhat disillusioned and hurt. It seems that daily we need the healing balm of God's Holy Spirit to help us keep a right perspective on the various issues that come across our path. So I think it is absolutely necessary that we daily seek from God a

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fresh unction, a fresh anointing, a fresh fullness of the Holy Spirit, so that we can know His moment by moment leading and direction. Amen to that folks.

— Carl Carmody, Editor of Challenge



Praise

1. Praise the Lord for His ongoing provision financially. We have had a number of some very encouraging gifts come in recently both for our Australian and African work.
2. Thank you to those who have faithfully prayed for our air conditioning costs. We thank God for His provision of the \$6,000 to cover the outstanding amount owing.
3. Thank God for the Englewood Baptist Church in North Carolina USA. Carl Carmody recently attended their mission conference and was just blessed beyond measure by the gracious and generous heart of the people. They have very kindly committed to supporting our work on a regular basis. Praise God!
4. Praise God for the partner organisations that we are working with in New Zealand and in South Australia. They are an invaluable part of a team effort to get out the gospel.
5. Praise the Lord for the amazing response we are seeing to the African edition of the paper. We are seeing 1200 plus commitments a month coming through which is proving a challenge to follow up on.
6. Praise the Lord for Harold Peasley's recent visit to Australia. Harold is the founding director of our partner organisation Multi Ministries. Praise the Lord for all the contacts that have been made and that they will bear fruit and for all the ministry that was done.

Pray

1. Pray for the growth of the Challenge distribution here in Australia. While it is very encouraging to see what God is doing overseas with the paper, it has not diminished our burden for Australia one bit. I think it would be fair to say that we are more burdened to reach this nation with the gospel than before. We would like to see our monthly print run increase to 80,000 per month. Pray for good orders for our Christmas edition of Challenge and for the right stories.
2. Pray for finances for our replacement vehicle for Challenge. It is very important that we have a reliable vehicle especially when we are out in the bush. We would value your prayer for this matter.
3. Pray for Joe Youngblood from Multi Ministries in the USA. He and his wife Connie tragically lost their 21-year-old son Tommy in a car accident. Pray for the Lord's comfort for them in this very difficult time.
4. Pray for a big outreach event happening in Swaziland in November. Our African edition of Challenge will feature heavily in this outreach. Pray for a big response to the gospel.
5. Pray for Carl Carmody and Mike Hunt as they visit South Africa in November for promotion purposes. Pray for safety and effectiveness as they visit churches and ministries in South Africa and Zimbabwe.
6. Pray for our sister newspaper in the UK Good News as they seek a replacement editor for the newspaper. They would value your prayer for God's wisdom during the search process as they earnestly look for the person of God's choice.



*Send your testimony to **Challenge** – Your conversion to Jesus Christ is a miracle, and is a wonderful means of witnessing to a lost world – Ring or write to Challenge for a testimony outline sheet.*

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