

Psalm 23

¹ The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;

³ he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I 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 goodness and mercy shall follow
me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

John 10: 11-18

¹¹ 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd **lays down his life for the sheep.** ¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. **And I lay down my life for the sheep.** ¹⁶I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because **I lay down my life in order to take it up again.** ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but **I lay it down of my own accord.** I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.'

Loving shepherd of Thy sheep

Loving shepherd of Thy sheep,
keep thy lamb, in safety keep;
nothing can thy power withstand;
none can pluck me from thy hand.

Loving Saviour, thou didst give
thine own life that we might live;
and the hands outstretched to bless
bear the cruel nails' impress.

I would bless Thee every day,
gladly all thy will obey,
like thy blessed ones above,
happy in Thy precious love.

Loving Shepherd, ever near,
teach thy lamb thy voice to hear;
suffer not my steps to stray
from the straight and narrow way.

Where thou leadest I would go,
walking in thy steps below,
then before my Father's throne,
I shall know as I am known.

Please turn over...

Questions to ponder:

Reading verses 1-3 of Psalm 23:

- What words here speak to you as you read them?
- When have you experienced any of this from Jesus – our attractive shepherd?
- In what ways are you drawn to Jesus?
- How often are you aware of Jesus being close to you? When and in what ways do you forget Jesus is close to you?

Psalm 23 verse 4

When I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil for you are with me; your rod and staff – they comfort me.

- Can you honestly say that?

- How has it felt for you when the difficult times come?
- When might Jesus's apparent attractiveness fail to be attractive to us?

(We are safe in God's hands. There is plenty of evil around but God won't let us be destroyed. It's our relationship of trust in and with God that transforms the situation. We will NOT fear. Apparently, the phrase, "Do not be afraid" occurs 365 times in the Bible. One phrase for each day.)

Sentences you might like to quietly repeat to yourself to still your mind and body, open to listening to God:

Be still and know that I am God.

I AM the Good Shepherd.