

*One of a series of devotions based on Psalm 23*

**THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD, YOU ARE WITH ME; YOUR ROD AND YOUR STAFF,  
THEY COMFORT ME.”**

Psalm 23:4 “The LORD is my shepherd. . . You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

“You are with me” (Psalm 23:4) is sort of like a bridge between the first and second thought of this verse. Your good Shepherd is with you when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death . . .and He is with you to comfort you. A good shepherd does not send His sheep into places He will not go with them. He is always out front, the first to go regardless of what is out there. Jesus says to you, “Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

There is even more to the picture David’s words draw. The Good Shepherd does not lead unprepared. He is equipped to successfully lead his sheep. He carries a “rod,” which is a club about two feet long and a “staff” which is the traditional long, straight walking stick with a hook at the top. The rod is to ward off predators. The crooked staff is to guide the sheep, pull down leafy branches for them to eat, and use the staff’s crook to hook it around a lamb to pull it to safety.

When have you been afraid? What predators have been after you? How many times have you veered off the path? Have you ever been in need of someone to care and nurture you? Have you lost your way? The second part of Psalm 23:4 is Jesus’ way, (I am your good shepherd – John 10:11) of assuring you He is well prepared to lead you into your future so you have nothing to fear. His “rod” and His “staff”, His almighty power, His constant presence, He knowing everything there is to know about you means He is able to safely lead you along your life’s way. The first part of verse 4 includes Jesus leading you safely and victorious through your earthly death into your eternal life with Him and all the saints.

Remember, you cannot have what David describes without first having the Shepherd. To have the same peace and comfort as David had, means you need the same faith and trust he had in Jesus. Out of His grace and mercy, your Heavenly Father gives you this faith to grasp the hand of Jesus as He reaches out to save you from your enemies and for you to receive the sustenance He provides to sustain your life (“green pastures and still waters.”) There are many shepherds promising you the world, but there is only ONE GOOD SHEPHERD, Jesus Christ, the Righteous One who can give you everything you need.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, my comfort in my life is knowing You are with me, that You are my Good Shepherd and you protect and provide for me everyday of my life. Thank you! Give me faith to hold on tenaciously to You and Your hand as you lead, guide, protect and provide for me. In Your holy name. Amen.

The King of love my shepherd is, Whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am His And He is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow, My ransomed soul He leadeth  
And where the verdant pastures grow, with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, But yet in love He sought me  
And on His shoulder gently laid And home rejoicing brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill With Thee, dear LORD beside me,  
Thy rod and staff my comfort still, Thy cross before to guide me.  
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