

PSALM 23 | *The Lord Is My Shepherd*

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

The Lord is my shepherd
My provider and protector
In times of want, there's no shortage
In times of wealth, no need for storage
Because I rely my daily supply of blessing
There is nothing that I'm missing
I've tried to fill my life with stuff
And I've had to live on barely enough
And discovered that the Shepherd's perfect love
Is my Source and Sustenance
Providing in every circumstance
The kind of life you can't find in any store
I'm no longer seduced by the endless pursuit of *more*
Because my Lord satisfies me to the very core
Of every deepest longing
Now there is no wanting anymore
Because there is nothing that I lack
And what I have is not payback for all my effort
It is because the Lord is my shepherd

GREEN PASTURES & QUIET WATERS

Yes, the Lord is *my* shepherd
In times of stress and anxiety
He draws me away from the frenetic pace of society
To be refreshed in green pastures
To gaze upon heavens rafters
To be in the here and now, not the before and afters
To rediscover joy and laughter
And let my fractured soul be soothed
And my rough edges, smoothed
I find my worth in the feeling of rebirth
As He reminds me that we are sons and daughters
He leads me beside quiet waters

The gentle trickle of meandering streams
Teeming with life and dreams
In these waters I find cleansing
His thirst quenching presence
The very essence of life
Quiet moments like medicine
Replenishment for the depleted
A kind of refreshment I didn't even know I needed
As all my broken pieces are made whole
He restores my soul

THE SHADOW OF DEATH

The *Lord* is my shepherd
Steering me out of the fast lane
And onto life's pathway
Straight as an arrow
But narrow and treacherous
He inspires me to be adventurous
As I walk through the Mount Everest of valleys
Down dark and dangerous alleys
Where hope hangs from the gallows
Where death casts its shadows all around
But even surrounded by evil
Death's sting is not lethal
For God's unequalled power is near
So I won't cower in fear
Even in the soul's dark night
Death's bark is worse than it's bite
In the valley, life begins to flower and flourish
And I find courage and grit
Survival, not of the fit, but of the faithful
And I am grateful
For God has made me able to rise
Ever at my side; before and behind
All around and within
Closer even than my own skin

IN THE PRESENCE OF ENEMIES

Yes, the Lord is my *shepherd*
And should I stray from the path of God
He guides me back with His staff and rod
And the discomfort is comforting
In the way that tears feel good when you're suffering
Reminding me of my true identity
He sets a place for me in the presence of my enemies
Friendships ruined by jealousies and lies
People I've learned to despise
Those marginalized by my privilege and pride
Those my action – *and inaction* – condemn
But at this table, there is no us and them
There is unity
An opportunity for the broken-hearted
To sit unguarded before each other
As sisters and brothers
Turning a meal into a feast
Finding that it is in releasing others that we are released
Learning that it is love, not time, that heals our wounds
As God prunes us like the olive branches we extend
We are pressed, like the oil he pours over our heads
And without even knowing
We are filled to overflowing

THE HOUSE OF GOD FOREVER

Full, where I once felt hollow
I am followed by goodness and mercy
Made worthy of God's eternal love
All my days: every breath; every motion
God's devotion is certain and sure
And I will endure as well
To dwell in God's house forever
And ever, and ever.... (repeat, fading out)