

Healing Words

Spiritual Resources For Your Hospital Stay

Daily Devotions
Personal Prayers
Scripture/Hymns
Chat with the Chaplain

Healing Words

Spiritual Resources For Your Hospital Stay

Vol. 23, No.1
Edited by Mark Zimmermann

The 23rd Psalm is one of the best known and most beloved passages of Scripture. It is a psalm that speaks to the struggles of the human condition of feeling lost and alone in an often dark and cruel world. It is a salve to our hurting souls and a balm for our tired bodies. Therefore, it is the perfect prescription for you who are hospitalized.

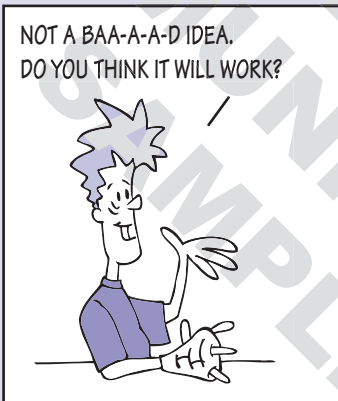
In these devotions, Paul Eggold, a retired hospital chaplain, goes phrase by phrase through this soothing psalm, reflecting on how these treasured words and images can help you through these days in this hospital when you may be feeling like a little lost sheep who is in need of Someone to shepherd you.

In this issue you will find:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Daily Devotions | 4-9 |
| Cartoon | 2 |
| Personal Prayers | 11-12 |
| Scripture, Hymns..... | 3, 10, 13 |
| Chat with the Chaplain..... | 14-16 |

STITCHES!

BY DAVID MEAD



You probably have had some restlessness getting ready to come here. And you may have some restless nights while you are here. Counting sheep may not work to bring us sleep, but we can always count on our Good Shepherd to bring us peace and comfort. Night and day, we can always rest secure in him and wrap his love around us like a warm blanket. So get tucked in to his love and be sure to pray to him!

FIRST DEVOTION



“The Lord is my shepherd.”

—Psalm 23:1—

An editor’s note in my Bible says that the title “shepherd” was used widely as a metaphor for kings in the ancient Near East and also among God’s people in Old Testament times. Here in this psalm King David talks about his joyful trust in the Lord as his good Shepherd-King.

Any discussion of the Lord as a shepherd immediately draws my attention to the words of Jesus in John 10:14 & 15. There Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.” Here we have the King of kings and the Lord of lords telling us that he knows each of us personally and intimately and loves us so powerfully that he is willing to lay down his life and die for us. Which is exactly what he did—and then rose again on that first Easter Sunday.

Think about that. Of all the hospital personnel you have encountered thus far, who really knows you? By contrast your Shepherd-King, Jesus the Christ, says, “I know my sheep.” He knows you intimately. He knows your present situation and what you are going through. “Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen; nobody knows but Jesus,” says the spiritual. Yes, Jesus knows. He knows—and cares—and wants to help. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, says, “So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’... your heavenly Father knows that you need them” (Matt. 6:31, 32). Your Good Shepherd knows you and promises to support you according to his everlasting love and grace.

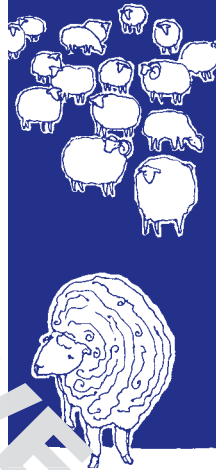
SECOND DEVOTION

“I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters...

Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life.”

—Psalm 23:1b-2, 6a—

Here are more metaphors: “green pastures,” “quiet waters,” picture words to describe the goodness and love of our Good Shepherd. Because he is a good and loving Shepherd, I have everything I need. Maybe not everything I want, but everything I need. What’s more, God’s “goodness and love” do more than “follow” me. The word for “follow” in Hebrew literally means “to pursue.” God’s goodness and love chase me down until I turn around and acknowledge their presence in my life.



Do these words in Psalm 23 mesh with your experience in the hospital right now? Is this a “good time” for you? Seriously, can you in any way acknowledge that something good can result from this hospitalization? Has there been or could there be any healing going on? Perhaps physical healing? Perhaps the healing of a relationship? Also, is there any greater “good” than this: that your Good Shepherd by his life, death and resurrection repaired the damage done by Adam’s fall? Consider these words, “You are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love” (Nehemiah 9:17). If these words are Good News to you today, then this is indeed a “good time” for you.

Leading Me

The Lord's My Shepherd

The Lord's my shepherd, leading me
to pastures newly green;
Deep flow the waters of his care,
his mercies unforeseen.
He loves me so, he leads me to
his pastures gently green.

My hungry soul he fills again
with manna from above;
He sets my footsteps right again
in pathways for his love.
For his name's sake he nurtures me
with manna from above.

Even within the vale of death
I feel no threat'ning chill,
His rod and staff protecting me,
his love beside me still.
His guardian love protecting me,
I fear no threat of ill.

How he confounds my enemies
by richly blessing me;
His cup of promise overflows
with generosity.
Anointing me his chosen one,
he richly blesses me.

Henry L. Lettermann

Prayers

(prayed in Jesus' name)

MORNING

I come to you this morning, Lord Jesus, thanking you for being with me during the night. I may or may not see the sun today, but I know that you, the Son of God, will be with me also this day. Help me to see you in all whom I meet today, especially all in this place who have been sent by you to take care of my needs. Help me also to treasure the time I have today and use it wisely. Amen.

MEALS

I want to thank you, my dear Good Shepherd, for the food that has been prepared for me and delivered to me. It probably was not prepared exactly to my liking. Nevertheless, it is nourishing food that my body needs. Help me to see your hand in all of this, that it is your way of spreading a table before me today. Amen.

EVENING

Dear Lord, my Good Shepherd, I face the darkness of another night. As I experience the "deep darkness" of this night, please be by my side with your "rod and staff" and protect me from anything that would harm me. Give me the ability to trust you no matter what tonight and tomorrow may bring and to be comforted by your promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.





CHAT WITH *the* Chaplain

God Is Close To You! by Bill Matzat

Chaplain: Good morning, Jan! I'm Chaplain Bill. I just stopped by to see how you are doing.

Jan: Not quite sure yet. I was surprised to be in a hospital when I woke up this morning. How did I get here?

Chaplain: An emergency helicopter flew you in from the interstate yesterday evening. Do you remember much?

Jan: Just seeing the rear end of a truck swinging into my lane, and then it was like someone turned out the lights.

Chaplain: Well, maybe it's better you don't remember much of the accident, but I will say that between the emergency crew and the staff here you were well cared for.

Jan: Oh, you were here when I came in last night?

Chaplain: Yes, I was "on call," and even though you were far from family and friends, many prayers were said on your behalf.

Jan: Why, thank you. I'm not a very religious person. Oh, I pray to God once in a while; I know he's for real. He certainly was there for me yesterday, wasn't he?

Chaplain: Yes, he was.

Jan: But I almost feel a little guilty.

Chaplain: Guilty?

Jan: That he took care of me, when he could have been taking care of someone much closer to himself.