

GOD,

*I Need
Your
Comfort*

KAY ARTHUR

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Psalm 23

A Psalm of David



The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.

He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of
righteousness for His name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my
enemies; You have anointed my head with oil;
my cup overflows. Surely goodness and
lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

A Psalm for You



Do you ever get lonely, my friend? I do. I think everyone gets lonely sometimes, and for each of us, loneliness is triggered by something different, something personal.

As I sit down to write this, I am all alone...and I feel a little weepy. I wish Jack were home, but he is away. In a few days I will be joining him, and for several weeks we will minister together. Our days will be occupied with people and service—and we will experience fulfillment. And yet I know the loneliness will come back. I won't want it to, but something will trigger a thought, and once again I'll have to deal with it.

How? I will remember the truths of Psalm 23, and there I will find the precepts, which—though they do

not remove the loneliness and the pain—enable me to live.

The words are so familiar: “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1). Familiar...like seeing an old friend...because we have heard them over and over again.

Maybe you memorized them in Sunday school. Maybe the words seem like an old friend because Psalm 23 is often read at funerals. Maybe the familiar words brought you comfort and assuaged your fear of death: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me.”

When you heard Psalm 23 as a child, you learned that God would always be with you. When you hear it as an adult, you are reminded that even in death God will be there. But meanwhile, what does one do for the day-by-day experiences which are bound to bring loneliness, apprehension, and anxiety?

The same psalm memorized in childhood and heard in the hour of death has the answers, for each day has enough trouble of its own (Matthew 6:34).

Psalm 23 is not merely a charming allegory for children or a memorial for the dead. It is a psalm for living. It is a psalm of comfort for life, no matter what

beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's

life brings, and its truths are summed up in the first and glorious verse: “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

It is a psalm for the 40-year-old man whose letter broke my heart when he told me, for the first time, what his parents had done to him when he was a child. When he was only 9 years old, he had walked into his parents’ room one day while they were looking at child pornography. As I read what they had done to him, I groaned in sorrow. His words came haltingly, even on paper. Some words were missing, replaced with dashes, for they were too perverted, too obscene, too twisted even to be written down. His parents did to him what they saw on the videotapes and in the magazines...and it went on for three years until, at age 12, he finally ran away. He ran away from the perversion, but he could not escape the anguish of memories which had become ever more frequent.

It is a psalm for a friend, younger than I, who has a brain tumor.

It is a psalm for another friend who seeks to live moment-by-moment above the rejection of her family, the weariness of earning a living, and the loneliness of her singleness.

It is a psalm of promise for my brothers and sisters who once lived under the atheistic tyranny of communism and to whom we now minister as they seek to know their Shepherd even better.

It is my psalm of assurance. When my days come to an end, I will turn around and see that even the small pain I experienced and the great pain my friends experienced will be seen as “goodness and lovingkindness.”

I know the words may be familiar, but read them again...thoughtfully. Watch how the pronoun referring to the Lord changes from “He” to “You” in verse 4.

Now, read it once again—this time aloud. Did you notice what the Shepherd does for His sheep and the benefits which come to the sheep as a result of the Shepherd’s care?

And, what does the sheep have to do? Selah—pause and think on it.

Is this a psalm for you, Beloved?

me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of