

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran
Church-WELS**

3rd Sunday of Easter.

Eisenach Series

April 10, 2016 Psalm 23

Evangelical Heritage Version

1 The LORD is my shepherd. I lack nothing. 2 He causes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. 3 He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You set a table for me in the sight of my foes. You drench my head with oil. My cup is overflowing. 6 Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.



Children of our Heavenly Father – precious in His sight for Jesus' sake:

When I was 12 years old a young woman named Kitty Genovese came home from work in the wee hours--in the dark! A man named Winston Moseley stalked her and attacked her. This attack lasted ½ an hour. Kitty cried out for help. There is a great debate about how many people heard her desperate cries for help. But nobody came to rescue her – as she was stabbed 14 times and attacked. Finally two people called the police. By the time the ambulance came – she died on the way to the hospital. Winston Moseley was arrested and convicted and sentenced to death. But 2 years later the state of New York decide they would not put anyone to death – no matter how horrible their crimes – no matter how certain their guilt! Winston Moseley escaped from

prison during a riot – and repeated his unspeakable crimes! When interviewed – he said he had but one regret – he regretted being *caught!* This week Winston Moseley died – at the age of 81 – he died. Does anyone care? Does anyone care about Winston – a wicked man – guilty of unspeakable crimes? Jesus cares. Jesus died on the cross for Winston’s sins and for yours and mine. We know that Jesus died for criminals who die in their cells – in their orange jumpsuit – literally locked up in their cell of cinder block and iron bars. And Jesus died for we who live in our homes with yards made extra green by chemicals and bright with flowers peeking through and robins eating worms from our rain wet drive ways. This day when we are tempted to complain – it’s too cold – it’s too rainy – it’s too windy God’s Word reminds us:

The LORD Is My Shepherd

- 1. He feeds me**
- 2. He leads me**
- 3. He blesses me!**

If I was in a terrible car crash – if I had a ♥ attack or a stroke – when we were in London – and we were going up an escalator – and a young lady in a hurry pushed against me – and my hip got stuck against the wall and my feet kept going up – and all of a sudden I was falling head first helplessly down the up escalator – and if I had broken my neck or broke my back – or got stuck and strangled at the bottom of the escalator – and I woke up in the hospital with only a few minutes left in my life – I would want to see Pastor Gartner – reciting the 23rd Psalm. I would want to hear one more time--**1 The LORD is my shepherd. I lack nothing.**

The LORD is my shepherd... The LORD – the Great I AM – the one who changes not – the same yesterday and today and forever! That **LORD is my shepherd.** You learn that when you

are very small. *"I am Jesus' little lamb!"* **I lack nothing!** I don't think we appreciate how good we have it! We have saving faith – a gift of the Holy Spirit. Pastor Harold F. Backer, Pastor of Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, LaCrosse – put 3 scoops of water on my tiny head on July 6, 1952. It was the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit as the Apostle Paul describes it in "Titus, chapter 3rd!" My sainted sponsor Aunt Alice was there. I saw a photograph of me at my baptism just the other day – when my cousin brought photo-albums my sponsor had kept for the last 63 years! My faith was confirmed by Pastor Kenneth J. Weber who was Pastor at St. John's with Pastor Kaufeldt back in 1971! Pastor Weber made me a preaching cross from carpenter nails. He did that if he confirmed you and you became a Pastor! **The LORD is my Shepherd. I lack nothing!** If you have the forgiveness of sins – you have everything! I have thought again and again lately about the man who was paralyzed. Jesus was teaching – in a house so full – the paralyzed guy's friends couldn't get in to see Jesus. So determined were these friends that they literally climbed up on the roof and dismantled the roof and lowered their friend by Jesus and Jesus said, **"Be of good cheer – your sins are forgiven!"** I always wonder what would have happened if the paralyzed man had said, "Thank you, Jesus! Pull me back up, my friends! I don't need to bother Jesus any further! I'm good!" And so?

The LORD is my Shepherd. I lack nothing! What do we have? Everything! When I went to Nigeria – and we had to travel we would go on motor-bikes. Not a Harley Hog – but a *Yamaha* – a *Suzuki* – and I would hang on – as we traveled what passed for a road – two tracks of sand – with short grass between – and 3' tall grass on the sides. Often times we would break down – and the driver would think about replacing the dirtiest spark plug

with 1 of 3 or 4 even more gunked up! I gave away a ball point pen like you have in your junk drawer to the guy who would drive me around all day – the pen you get free from the bank – and they would immediately ask – “Is to use while you are here – or to keep?” They didn’t have *Post-it Notes* – but would find a page of a newspaper – and tear the paper from around the edges and use that to write notes! Give them a hand-me-down shoe with a literal hole through it – and they would say – “If I had cardboard and a scissors – I would cut out a piece and fix this.” But they don’t have cardboard or a scissors! They scuff in dress shoes 3 sizes too big – with no socks. They cinch belts to hold up trousers many sizes too big. They wear neckties literally faded from the sun. They eat chickens that are malnourished – the chicken malnourished and then they eat the chicken bones – grinding them up because they are protein! In Haiti children are literally malnourished with one Frisbee of rice and beans as they only meal for the day – with a sandwich bag of clean water to drink. A piece of pulled chicken or a piece of fruit is a treat! And in America we have snacks – more food than they eat in a day – between meals because we are nervous or bored! Have lunch with an Evangelist in Port Au Prince – in a fast food place that serves a meal of rice and beans and two pieces of chicken – and say to your neighbor – would you like one of my pieces of chicken and some of my rice – and they don’t say, “No thanks! That’s ok!” They push their Styrofoam plate over and watch with almost tears in their eyes as you scrape your food onto their plate! We have dresser drawers and hampers and laundry baskets and walk in closets – and they have not 1 hanger – not 1 hanger – because what would they do with it!

2 He causes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. 3 He restores my soul. He guides me in

paths of righteousness for his name's sake. We had sheep on the farm where I grew up. Sheep lie down when all their needs are met – and when they know they are safe. Then they lie down! In Israel – where so much is creamy rock and stone – to find green pastures is not a given! Martin Luther liked to say – the green pastures and cool quiet refreshing water is not just good nourishing things to eat and drink. It's nourishment for faith and soul in God's Word! When you are worried, anxious, troubled – it's difficult to eat. If the troubles are painful even emotional – it can be difficult even to swallow! If you have the blessing of a good conscience – because you know with childlike trust that Jesus took all your sins away – then some pretty simple food can be very delicious and satisfying – for Jesus' sake!

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. When I was a Vicar – it was my job to go to Waukesha Memorial to practice visiting people in the Hospital. I went to visit a man named Henry on October 31, 1977. Henry was in Intensive Care – with an oxygen mask over his nose and mouth. I stood beside his bed and squeezed his hand and he smiled at me. I did my best to read God's Word to him and to pray with him. I told him every way I could think of – that Jesus loved him and took all of his sins away. That what ever happened it would be good – because Jesus loved him very much! I took his hand again – and he squeezed it and smiled at me. I went through the big heavy doors and stood there for a minute – when I heard them say, "Code blue in ICU!" I turned around to look and everyone was running in by Henry! Henry on October 31st was 57 years, 7 months and 28 days old. That's the day Henry saw Jesus face to face! Jesus wanted Henry to hear one last time how much He loved him – and then he brought Henry Home!

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. When I was a Vicar Pastor Martin Stern was Pastor of Mt. Calvary in Waukesha. Pastor Stern had cancer – and because his treatments were so harsh and the side-effects so painful – he stayed in the hospital. And my Bishop sent me to visit Pastor Stern. So I would. And Pastor Stern would say, “Do a devotion! Tell me God’s Word! Pray with me!” And I would say, “Pastor Stern – what do I know that you don’t already know? What should I tell you?” And he would say, “Tell me how much Jesus loves me! Tell me about my Savior! Tell me one more time what Jesus did to redeem me! Tell me!” And I would try – as hard as I could – and he would listen so carefully. And then Pastor Stern would tell me how much Jesus loved me! And by the time he was done – I felt so comforted. I felt so encouraged. I was so thankful that he told me God’s Word to encourage me!

5 You set a table for me in the sight of my foes. That is – in the presence of all my enemies! **You drench my head with oil. My cup is overflowing.** You wouldn’t ordinarily think of a beautifully set table when there is danger all around. If you watched Downton Abbey – you would see the wait staff set the table – all the spoons and forks and knives – the napkins – the plates and bowls and more – each precisely set! When the Good Shepherd keeps us safe – you can set the table for a banquet – a feast – a celebration – because we are safe! You drench my head with oil – soothing, relaxing – refreshing. When I get my hair cut – Ashley washes my hair – and massages my scalp – and then puts a nice warm towel on my face – and then there is this little bottle of refreshing juice. And she sprays it – psssst! Psssst! And I have to smile – it feels so refreshing! **My cup is overflowing!** We have so many blessings – we don’t have space

to store them all! And the most precious of all are invisible – faith, forgiveness, an inheritance stored up in Heaven. I have an inheritance – over 135 years old – a golden eagle from my Great Uncle Charlie! It cannot be bought or sold or traded – only inherited! It is priceless – irreplaceable – *nothing* – compared to knowing Jesus. Forever will not be too long to thank our Good Shepherd! Thank you, Jesus! Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony P. Schatz
