

PSALM 23

-- paraphrase by Jim Taylor:

One: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures; he leads me
beside the still waters. He restores my soul.

**All: God has walked with me; I could ask for nothing more.
God has given me wide fields to walk in, running streams
to think beside, untrodden paths to explore.**

One: He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

**All: When I thought the world rested on my shoulders,
God put things into perspective;
When I lashed out at an unfair world, God calmed me
down, When I drifted into harmful ways, God straightened me
out. God was with me all the way.**

One: 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 staff
comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of
my enemies: you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

**All: I do not know what lies ahead, but I am not afraid.
I know you will be with me. Even in death, I will not
despair.
You will comfort and support me.
Though my eye dims and my mind dulls,
you will continue to care about me. Your touch will
soothe the tension And my fears will fade away. I am content.**

One: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my
life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

**All: In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with me.
All through life, I have found goodness in people.
When life ends,
I will be gathered into the ultimate goodness of God.**

1 John 3:16-24 from *The Message*

¹⁶We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. ¹⁷How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister^o in need and yet refuses help?

¹⁸Little children, **let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.** ¹⁹And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; ²²and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

²³And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and **love one another, just as he has commanded us.** ²⁴All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

John 10:11-18 from *The Message*

¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴**I am the good shepherd.** I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes^o it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."