

## **I will not be afraid**

Psalm 23

May 3, 2009

*The Lord is my shepherd;  
I have everything I need.  
He lets me rest in fields of green grass  
and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.  
He gives me new strength.  
He guides me in the right paths,  
as he has promised.  
Even if I go through the deepest darkness,  
I will not be afraid, Lord,  
for you are with me.  
Your shepherd's rod and staff protect me.*

*You prepare a banquet for me,  
where all my enemies can see me;  
you welcome me as an honored guest  
and fill my cup to the brim.  
I know that your goodness and love  
will be with me all my life;  
and your house will be my home  
as long as I live.*

Even if the economy gets worse before it gets better,  
even if the stock market continues its slide and my 401k  
loses another third of its value,  
even if I cannot afford health insurance and even if I have to choose sometimes  
which bills to pay and which bills to let slide another month,  
even if I am laid off,

I will not be afraid ...  
You, Lord, are my shepherd;  
I have everything I need.

Even if I feel tired and worn out and used up and stretched  
to the limits of my endurance,  
even if I feel discouraged or defeated or depressed,  
even if I don't feel ready to do it one more year or even one more time,  
even if I feel old, too old,

I will not be afraid ...  
You, Lord, are my shepherd,  
and you give me new strength.

Even if I really don't know which choice is the right choice,  
even if I'm really not sure if I'm doing what I should be doing  
and am really not sure what I should do next,  
even if I get sidetracked too easily or distracted too quickly or waste  
too much time,  
even if I feel lost,

I will not be afraid ...  
You, Lord, are my shepherd,  
and you guide me in the right paths.

Even if I face hip surgery or heart surgery or round after round  
of treatments for cancer,  
even if I face living on without my husband or my wife,  
without my father or my mother,  
even if my body is giving out, wearing out, and I know my own death  
cannot be long in coming,  
even if I am suffering, more than I ever thought I would,  
more than I ever thought I could bear,

I will not be afraid ...  
You, Lord, are my shepherd,  
and you are with me and you protect me.

Even if I feel threatened and intimidated by people who don't like me,  
even if I feel overlooked or unappreciated by people who don't care about me,  
even if I don't feel understood or accepted or loved,  
even if I have enemies, more than I deserve,

I will not be afraid ...  
You, Lord, are my shepherd;  
you welcome me and you show me honor.

Even if I feel out of place sometimes, like a stranger in a strange land,  
even if I feel lonely sometimes, even if I am alone, much of the time,  
even if I feel homeless,  
even if I am homeless,

I will not be afraid ...  
You, Lord, are my shepherd,  
and your house will be my home, always.

Life is uncertain ...

We don't know what tomorrow will bring,  
what challenges we will face  
or blessings we will enjoy,  
what griefs we will have to bear  
or joys we will have to celebrate.

Life is uncertain ...

But this is certain! The Lord is our shepherd!

Almost surely, we will face economic uncertainty,  
and bodies that grow old and tired, and difficult choices.  
Almost surely, we will have enemies, and lonely times,  
and dark, forbidding times.

But surely -- not almost surely, but surely! -- surely, the Lord, our shepherd,  
will protect and provide and strengthen and guide  
and bless us and remain with us ... always!

Life is uncertain ...

But the Lord's love is certain!

*There is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from  
the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Not trouble, not danger,  
not sickness, not want,  
not threat, not terror,  
not suffering, not grief,  
not sadness, not loneliness,  
not ...

*There is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate you from  
the love of God which is yours through Christ Jesus our Lord!*

The Lord is your shepherd ...

Do not be afraid!