

**The King of Love our Shepherd is!**

**I. PSALM 23:1-6 – by King David**

1: The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want.

2: He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.

3: He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.

4: Yea, though I walk through The Valley of The Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

5: Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in The House of The LORD for ever. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1, KJV, PSALM 23:1-6.

## II. Faith in The Face of Trial

BR is a 13 year old boy who came in to the hospital 6 weeks ago. He is battling a deteriorating neuromuscular disease that has required him to be placed on a ventilator 24/7, i.e. around the clock. He is awake and alert, able to move his fingers and toes a little, and make facial expressions. He has begun to talk on his trach vent.

Last week I gave Dad and Mom a break and sat with Brian to draw a crayon picture of his pet dog. This week I found Mom in training to be BR's home care "nurse." As I walked in, she was doing chest "physical therapy" with her hands on her son's chest to loosen lung secretions and then suctioning him through his tracheal tube. Her son had complete trust in her. She did these things so gently and efficiently. And after she was done, as she invited me in, she knelt over to kiss her son on the cheek.

Dad and Mom have been walking closer and closer with their precious child towards that frightful place of The Valley of The Shadow of Death - צְלֵמֶת גַּיָּא<sup>2</sup> – GEY'<sup>3</sup> TSALMAVETH<sup>4</sup> – A Steep Valley of Deep Darkness, Distress and Danger; The Narrow Gorge of The Death Shadow of The Place of the Dead.

But in the times I have met this family, I discern a Presence of GOD's Peace in them. They have fears, but know The LORD is their Shepherd. They have hungers, but know that The LORD is their daily Bread. They have needs, but know that The LORD is their King. And it was my privilege, in various ways, to accompany them with their son BR as These Things of GOD came into fuller view.

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<sup>2</sup> 2, MMHEB, PSALM 23:4.

<sup>3</sup> 3, Strong's Data Lexicon, 1516 - גַּיָּא - GEY'. **Meaning:** 1) valley, a steep valley, narrow gorge.

<sup>4</sup> 3, Strong's Data Lexicon, 6757 - צְלֵמֶת - TSALMAVETH. **Meaning:** 1) death-shadow, deep shadow, deep darkness, shadow of death 1a) death-shadow 1b) death-shadow, deep shadow, darkness 1c) death-shadow (of distress, extreme danger) (fig) 1d) death-shadow (of place of the dead).

### III. Treading Near The Valley of The Shadow of Death

In hospital Ministry, we are called to walk with people through The Valley of The Shadow of Death so often. It can be a scary place. We can fight illness, injury, disease, despair, an assortment of wants, circumstances and even one another. But when our time comes to leave this world, The Death Shadow finds us all. And in our mortality, every day that we draw breath we in fact live on the edge of That Shadow.

“...Between the part of The Flock on earth and that which is gone to Heaven, death lies like a Dark Valley that must be passed in going from one to the other. [Yes,] ...It is a valley deep indeed and dark...; but valleys are often fruitful...” With The Lord, we “...walk through it” and are not lost, “but get safe to The Mountain” of GOD’s Everlasting House “on the other side.”<sup>5</sup>

When The Death Shadow draws near to us, “...GOD will rebuke the enemy; He will guide... [us] with His rod, and sustain... [us] with His staff... The Lord's People feast at His table, upon the provisions of His love. And nothing can take That from us when we “are anointed with The HOLY SPIRIT, and drink of the cup of salvation which is ever full” in Him!<sup>6</sup>

The LORD is indeed our Eternal Good Shepherd and we are His sheep. The LORD is indeed our Eternal Good Host and we are His guests. The LORD is indeed our Eternal King and we are His subjects.<sup>7</sup> GOD protects and guides us with His rod and staff. He leads us to The Living Waters of His Love, refreshing our souls. He sets before us The Living Bread to feed and nourish us with His Own hand. He anoints us with the oil of His Presence and Mercy. He goes before us to prepare a place for us in His Kingdom, both now and forever.

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<sup>5</sup> 4, Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary, PSALM 23:1-6.  
<http://mhc.biblecommenter.com/psalms/23.htm> Retrieved 10/12/2009.

<sup>6</sup> 4, Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary, PSALM 23:1-6.  
<http://mhc.biblecommenter.com/psalms/23.htm> Retrieved 10/12/2009.

<sup>7</sup> 5, The Roman Breviary, June 10, 2009. PSALM 23.  
<http://www.breviary.net/comment/comment5prim.htm>

Maybe this is why PSALM 23 is so popular with so many people in difficult times. Whatever our needs may be, there are Words Here to comfort and encourage us. Even when The very Death Shadow draws near to us or our loved ones, David reminds us that The LORD is with us to bring us from death into life; that He will meet our needs in That Time; that therefore in the end we need not fear; that we are never alone - even in The Valley of The Shadow of Death. Our most important want will be fulfilled – to dwell with GOD and enjoy Him forever – for The King of Love our Shepherd is!

**IV. A Hymn – “The King of Love My Shepherd is!”<sup>8</sup>**

Let us come together before The LORD!  
Each according to our own Tradition.  
The LORD be with you!  
And also with you!

The King of Love my Shepherd is,  
Whose Goodness faileth never,  
I nothing lack if I am His  
And He is mine forever.

Where Streams of Living Water flow  
My ransomed soul He leadeth,  
And where the verdant pastures grow,  
With Food Celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,  
But yet in love He sought me,  
And on His shoulder gently laid,  
And home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death’s dark vale I fear no ill  
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me;  
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,  
Thy Cross before to guide me.

Thou spread’st a Table in my sight;  
Thy... [Anointing] Grace bestoweth;  
And O what transport of delight  
From Thy Pure Chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days  
Thy Goodness faileth never;  
Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise  
Within Thy House forever. [AMEN.]

Let us go forth to love and serve The LORD!  
Thanks be to GOD!

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<sup>8</sup> 6, Baker, Hymn – “The King of Love, My Shepherd is!”

**V. References**

1. “King James Version” Bible. Bible Works 7. Bible Works, LLC. Norfolk, Virginia. 2006.
2. “Mechon-Mamre Hebrew-English Bible.” Mechon-Mamre. 2005. <http://www.mechon-mamre.org/index.htm>
3. “Strong’s Data” Bible Lexicon. Bible Works 7. Bible Works, LLC. Norfolk, Virginia. 2006.
4. Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary. Biblos.com Online Parallel Bible Project, Glassport, PA. 2004-2009. <http://biblos.com/>
5. “Breviary Mobile - The Divine Office of the Most Holy Roman Catholic Church In Easy-To-Read Format.” The Roman Breviary. The Divine Office of The Most Holy Roman Catholic Church. Cofraternity of Saints Peter and Paul. <http://www.breviary.net/>
6. Hymn, “The King of Love, My Shepherd is!”  
<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/k/i/kinglove.htm>  
Words: Henry W. Baker, in Hymns Ancient and Modern (London: 1868).  
[This Hymn was sung at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, in Westminster Abbey, London, September 6, 1997.]