



AMUA Mid-Year Devotions

2025



Of the whole Old Testament, there is hardly a passage more famous than Psalm 23 – and with good reason. It captures in just a few words the very heart of our relationship with God. It is certainly worth learning off by heart and frequently meditating on it. In these devotions, we move from sentence to sentence of the Psalm, thinking about what it means for us and what it will mean for us.

1. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

The ancient shepherd was absolutely committed to the welfare of his sheep. His task was to provide for them and to protect them. He would put himself into danger in order to guard his flock from the dangerous predators wanting to kill them. Jesus tells us that a good shepherd would search for one lost sheep until he found it and then carry it home. In saying this he is explaining that he is the Good Shepherd and telling us what he does in order to save us and then to protect us. The opening verse of Psalm 23 are words that every Christian can say, our hearts filled with gratitude for all the Lord has done for us and all he promises to do: 'I shall not want'.

Response:

Father God, thank you with all my heart for the work of the Good Shepherd, who saved me and is carrying me home. Amen.

2. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

The good shepherd provides and cares for his flock. He gives them the best food and he takes them to the spot where they most easily drink. This is exactly like the Lord. When we say grace at meals we are acknowledging his provision; when we pray before sleep in the evening we are thanking him for the gift of another day. But, more than that, our daily bread is not merely the provision for our body. It is the bread of life for our souls, the way in which through his word the Lord feeds our faith daily and sustains and blesses us in our walk. There will be pain and suffering as we live out our lives in this world, but deep in our hearts the Lord will provide for us out of his grace. Of that we may be sure.

Response:

Gracious Father, thank you for feeding my body and sustaining my soul with Jesus, the Bread of Life. Amen.

3. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

The Good Shepherd gave his life for the sheep. We were dead in our trespasses and sins, worthy only of an adverse judgement. But through Jesus we have been forgiven, we have been washed, we have come alive towards God. This is the greatest miracle of all, amazing grace. Now we walk with him, learning to follow him, learning how we should live from him, and as we do we walk in the paths of righteousness. How thankful we should be for what he has done and what he is doing. He is bringing his sheep home.

Response:

Lord of grace and mercy, words fail me as I think of what you have done for me. Please help me to walk in the paths of righteousness now that I have been saved. Amen.

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

God's word never lets us forget that until the Lord comes back, we live in a world of sin and evil and suffering. One of the first stories after Pentecost is that of Stephen, a godly Christian stoned to death because of his faith in Jesus. He walked through the valley of the shadow of death, but he walked this way with Jesus, whose rod of protection and staff of provision gave him comfort. Indeed, in his last moments, he saw Jesus. When we walk through the valley we will walk with the Lord and when we have passed through, we will see him with inexpressible joy. That is our hope, which will never fail us.

Response:

Almighty God, grant that in this life I will be sustained by the knowledge that I am walking with Jesus, that he will be with me always and that I shall see him when I go home at the end. Amen.

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

We cannot live without faith. But our faith is only as good as the person we put our faith in. Those who belong to the Lord have their faith in the Lord and it can never fail us, because he will not fail us. Even if we face opposition and persecution, he will not fail us. We have spiritual enemies who wish for our downfall. But so powerless are they in the presence of the Lord, we have no need to fear and the Lord enriches us with blessing as only he can. Indeed, 'my cup overflows'.

Response:

Heavenly King, I am ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven and to you I bring the tribute of my faith and worship. Amen.

6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

What does your heart long for in this life? As we mature, we ought to see more and more clearly that it is not honour and prestige and riches. It is goodness and mercy. It is not our own goodness; it is the goodness of the Lord. It is not our own mercy; it is the mercy we have received from him, undeserving though we are. It is another way of speaking of the love of God. The God of love has enfolded us and holds us. How can we be sure of this? Look at what the Good Shepherd has done for us and is doing with us. We are walking in goodness and mercy.

Response:

God of love, I thank you that even in the valley of the shadow of death, your goodness and mercy will embrace me and hold me. Amen.

7. And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Our life to come is not easy for us to describe. There are some wonderful pictures and promises in the Bible. But the one that gives us greatest consolation and hope is this: that when we die, we will be with the Lord, and we will be like the Lord and we will walk with the Lord forever. We will be transformed into the men and women that we should be and our joy will be boundless. We will be at home with the Lord, the Good Shepherd, forever.

Response:

Loving Father, fill my heart with hope and joy in your promise that we shall dwell in your house forever. Amen.